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# Dual Disadvantage: An Examination of Racial Disparities in Victim and Suspect Criminal Justice Treatment

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Abstract

During the past several decades, American criminal justice legal systems appear to have been over-punishing Black individuals as perpetrators of crime, and neglecting them as violent crime victims, perpetuating disparities that simultaneously repress and alienate Black citizens. Such complex processes of racial inequality are difficult to capture in studies that focus on single criminal justice stages and limited sets of variables. After presenting a working conceptualization of case processing that can be used across criminal justice systems, the current study uses data from the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department, St. Louis Circuit Attorney's Office, and U.S. Census to assess racial disparities in victim and suspect treatment across police clearance and prosecutorial case screening stages. The results demonstrate that the effects of race and other case-level characteristics largely depend on the criminal justice stage in question, as well as the inclusion of victim and suspect race – and their interaction – in models. Importantly, the findings suggest that racial disparities in criminal justice system treatment may be experienced during initial criminal justice stages.

Situating studies of case processing within a general framework that examines the different effects of victim and suspect race is key in pointing to racial disparities and discerning the theoretical mechanisms underlying criminal justice system treatment. Future research should continue studying racial disparities in clearance and case screening, and should connect these early stages of case processing to later ones.

# CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

In today's society, Black individuals are disproportionately arrested, prosecuted, and imprisoned (Kutateladze, Andiloro, Johnson, & Spohn, 2014; Spohn & Holleran, 2000; Warren et al., 2012). At the same time, Black victims and communities appear to be disproportionately neglected by criminal justice systems at various levels of case processing (Bell, 2017; Forman, 2017; Miller, 2014; Soss & Weaver, 2017; Taylor, Holleran, & Topalli, 2009). Criminal justice research has generally focused on the first part of this paradox, centering around criminalization, sentence enhancements, and incarceration trends and the ways in which such trends have been highly racialized and have ultimately perpetuated disadvantage. The current dissertation attempts to confront the paradox as a whole. In addition to considering racial disparities in suspect outcomes, it attends to criminal justice systems' differential treatment of Black victims.

The goals for the dissertation are twofold. First, it aims to provide a basis for studying case processing across various criminal justice stages and institutions. After describing the policing, prosecutor, and court literatures, a working conceptualization of case processing outcomes is presented that accounts for alternative hypotheses and considers the ways in which characteristics of persons, crimes, organizations, and communities have been proposed to affect treatment within and across criminal justice stages. The framework considers a variety of case processing outcomes; synthesizes traditional characteristics into straightforward, practical categories; and operationalizes concepts that have yet to be examined empirically, but have been labeled important in journalistic accounts and theories outside of mainstream criminology. Situating studies of

case processing within a general framework that examines the diverse ways in which factors such as race affect case processing is key in identifying disparities and discerning the mechanisms that are affecting treatment within the criminal legal system.

Multilevel regression is then used to empirically examine (1) if Black victims and/or suspects experience treatment disparities at initial case processing decision points, and (2) the mechanisms underlying racial disparities in case processing. Specifically, I examine whether cases involving Black victims are disproportionately neglected by the police and prosecutors, whether cases involving Black suspects are disproportionately prioritized, and concepts that have been proposed to affect race and case processing.[1] The literature suggests that Black victims may be less likely than similarly situated White victims to have their crimes cleared and prosecuted. Black suspects may experience disproportionately harsh punishment at each criminal justice stage, as well as cumulatively. But when factors such as victim-suspect relationship are considered, the influences of race on criminal justice system treatment are expected to change in important ways.

## 1.1 RESEARCH CHALLENGES

The research on race effects in the criminal justice system is mixed. A number of empirical studies find support for the argument that criminal justice systems have been overly punitive toward Black persons who have perpetrated crime (Cole, 1998, 1999; Chesney-Lind & Mauer, 2003), and scholars suggest that Black victims and communities

[1] While the main focus of the dissertation is on Black-White disparities, I also examine differences between Hispanic and non-Hispanic victims and suspects, as Hispanic individuals appear to experience disparities in treatment. The small sample sizes of Hispanic victims and suspects prevents the study from being able to make strong conclusions regarding these disparities.

have been consistently neglected by public service institutions, including but certainly not limited to criminal justice systems (Forman, 2012; Miller, 2013; Natapoff, 2006; Soss & Weaver, 2017; Stuntz, 2006). Because of the intraracial nature of crime, such disparities in victim and suspect treatment appear to be an inevitable contradiction (O'Brien, 1987; Sampson, 1984; Sampson & Lauritsen, 1994, 1997). The current dissertation is interested in unpacking these processes.

Some studies find that crimes involving Black victims have particularly *low* clearance rates (Roberts & Lyons, 2009), and victims of color have been found to be less likely than White victims to be provided resources, information, and advocacy by criminal justice actors (Herman, 2010; Newmark, 2004).[2] Black defendants have been found to be treated *more punitively* than non-Black defendants in the courtroom (Caravelis, Chiricos, & Bales, 2011; Schlesinger, 2013).

Though crimes involving Black victims and occurring in disadvantaged, Black communities have been shown to have particularly low police clearance rates (Regoeczi, Jarvis, & Riedel, 2008; Roberts & Lyons, 2009; Petersen, 2017a), some studies find nonsignificant race effects and suggest that other predictors, such as offense circumstances and pressures to clear particular crime types, are important in influencing clearance (Addington, 2006; Jiao, 2007; Puckett & Lundman, 2003; Wellford & Cronin,

[2] A number of studies suggest that while victims prefer to see their cases being handled seriously by criminal justice system actors (Strang & Sherman, 2003), and have specific needs regarding access to case information and restitution (Herman, 2010), their preferences appear to be neglected at various stages of case processing (Davis et al., 1984; Taylor, Holleran, & Topalli, 2009). For evidence of victims wanting their cases handled seriously by criminal justice system actors, see also Braga and MacDonald, 2019; Herman, 2010; Miller, 2015; and Natapoff, 2009. For evidence suggesting victims' specific needs regarding access to case information and restitution, see also Maguire and Bennett,1982; Shapland, Willmore, and Duff, 1985; Strang and Sherman, 2003; Umbreit, 1989; and Wemmers, Van der Leeden, & Steensma, 1999. For more on victim neglect at various stages of case processing, see also Herman, 2010 and Miller, 2013.

1999). Most studies of case processing within the courts find that young Black men are overrepresented and more harshly punished than others for the same crimes and at various punishment stages (Kutateladze, et al., 2014; Spohn & Holleran, 2000; Warren et al., 2012).[3] Others, however, find non-significant race effects, particularly once offense characteristics (Holleran, Beichner, & Spohn, 2010; Worrall, Ross, & McCord, 2006), victim characteristics (Worrall et al., 2006), and community factors (Franklin, 2010) are considered. Some even find that cases involving Black defendants and victims are treated *less harshly* in courts (Wooldredge & Thistlethwaite, 2004), a finding that is consistent with the idea that Black victims are neglected. A number of studies of victims find that prosecutors are more, and not less, likely to reject cases involving non-White victims than White victims during case screening (Spohn, 2014), and Black individuals have been found to be less likely to be prosecuted than Whites (Kutateladze, 2018; Kutateladze, et al., 2014).[4]

There are several possible reasons for disparate findings regarding racial disparities in criminal justice system treatment. In addition to disregarding the broad social and historical contexts that criminal justice systems operate in, studies are limited by their "imprecise measures of critical variables, inadequate controls for potentially important factors, and the[ir] general failure to integrate different theoretical perspectives" (Myers & Talarico, 2012: 1). Since the current dissertation is limited to

[3] For more evidence of this claim, see also Caravelis, Chiricos, & Bales, 2011; Crawford, Chiricos, & Kleck, 1998; Frederick and Stemen, 2012; Johnson and Larroulet, 2019; Kutateladze et al., 2014; Metcalfe and Chiricos, 2018; Piehl & Bushway, 2007; Schlesinger, 2013; Sorensen and Wallace, 1999; and Ulmer, Kurlychek, and Kramer, 2007, among others.

[4] For more evidence that prosecutors are more likely to reject cases involving non-White victims than White victims during case screening, see Kingsnorth, Lopez, Wentworth, and Cummings, 1998; Pyrooz, Wolfe, and Spohn, 2011; and Sorensen and Wallace, 1999. For more evidence that Black persons are less likely than White persons to be charged and fully prosecuted, see Wooldredge and Thistlethwaite, 2004.

analyzing crimes that took place during one year and in a single jurisdiction, it is not able to attend to the numerous historical and jurisdictional factors that may impact the effects of race on treatment over time and across contexts. This is important, as jurisdictions vary largely in their abilities to clear and charge crimes, with changes over time (Alderden & Ullman, 2012a, 2012b; Bouffard, 2000; Spohn & Tellis, 2012).[5] The dissertation does, however, address important issues relating to conceptualization and measurement (discussed below).

Subareas of research in criminology use incomplete and sometimes incompatible frameworks to explain various outcomes, and criminal justice stages have tended to be studied on their own, making it difficult to thoroughly assess the effects of race and ethnicity on the full set of case processing decisions (Hagan, 1974). Relatedly, victim and suspect race tend to be examined separately from one another, when literature suggests that their interaction may be important (Paternoster, 1983; Taylor et al., 2009). If we are to comprehensively understand victim and suspect treatment, the criminal justice system must be viewed as a multi-staged process that includes – but certainly is not limited to – victim and suspect race.

Police and prosecutor decision-making literatures use different frameworks to explain criminal justice outcomes. Theories of police clearance focus on person and case characteristics, while the dominant theory explaining prosecutor and court case processing focuses on the stereotypes and practical concerns of criminal justice system actors. Policing scholars suggest that clearance rates reflect (a) the solvability of cases

[5] An estimated 12 to 45 percent of police reports are translated into an arrest, and between 39 and 82 percent of the cases presented to prosecutor result in charging, depending on the jurisdiction and year in question (Alderden & Ullman, 2012a, 2012b; Bouffard, 2000; Spohn & Tellis, 2012).

(Gottfredson & Hindelang, 1979; Roberts, 2007), and/or (b) the populations that the police choose to prioritize (Black, 1976, 1983; Garland, 1996). The most popular theory of prosecutor decision-making is the focal concerns perspective, which posits that court actors (e.g., attorneys, judges) often use stereotypes about offenses, victims, and defendants in deciding punishment outcomes (Hartley, Maddan, & Spohn, 2007; Steffensmeier, Kramer, & Streifel, 1993; Steffensmeier, Ulmer, & Kramer, 1998).

Though there is evidence to suggest that a number of processes might work to influence the treatment of victims and suspects throughout case processing, data and theoretical limitations have prevented studies from considering the totality of contextual and situational characteristics that may explain very important case processing outcomes and contribute to important disparities among them. Clearance studies, for instance, focus on certain characteristics of people and offenses, typically without consideration of potentially important neighborhood or resource characteristics. Studies of prosecutor and court case processing do well in examining factors relating to cases, persons, and jurisdictions, but they often lack quality measures of key characteristics, such as witness involvement. Though a number of recent studies use large and diverse samples to examine case processing (e.g., Kutateladze, 2018), studies have traditionally focused on specific crime types, limiting their generalizability. Additionally, most study samples are limited to crimes involving one victim and offender, although a substantial proportion of crimes involve multiple offenders and/or victims. Crimes that involve multiple victims and/or perpetrators of crime (e.g., a group of gang members who were ordered by their leader to victimize one or multiple rival gang members) have been shown to be markedly different from crimes with single victims and offenders (Taylor et al., 2009; Short &

Strodtbeck, 1965). Further, different theoretical perspectives have overlapping constructs, and studies rarely mention that alternative interpretations of variables are possible or attempt to reconcile competing operationalizations (for an exception, see Kutateladze and colleagues' 2014 study, which acknowledges that defense counsel type may not be limited to measuring a defendant's socioeconomic status). In addition, studies have yet to include the potentially important interaction of theoretically relevant predictors, such as victim race and crime type. Exploring these interactions is an important step in disentangling alternative perspectives and their relative influences on clearance and prosecution.

While punishment stages have been studied in depth on their own, we know little about how disparities operate throughout the "life course" of cases (Johnson, 2015). Scholars have for many years documented the ways in which police behaviors may influence the behaviors of prosecutors (Black & Reiss, 1970), but few studies have systematically examined the influence of a wide range of variables on police clearance and subsequent decisions, such as prosecutorial case screening (Kutateladze, Lawson, & Andiloro, 2015; Petersen, 2017b; Spohn & Tellis, 2019). Studies of case processing typically focus on single outcomes, including police clearance (Braga & Dusseault, 2018), various decisions made by prosecutors (Hartley et al., 2007; Spohn, Beichner, & Davis-Frenzel, 2001) and sentencing decisions made by judges (Ulmer & Johnson, 2004). Case screening research, which examines particular elements involved in initial prosecutorial screening decisions (Kutateladze, Lynn, & Liang, 2012), has done well in examining charging outcomes (Frederick & Stemen, 2012; Spohn et al., 2001), charge reductions (Shermer & Johnson, 2010), and case dismissals (Baumer, Messner, & Felson,

2000), but has tended to overlook prior police decisions.[6] Studies that consider both victim and suspect race across multiple criminal justice stages are particularly rare, and most are limited to explaining sexual assault (Holleran et al., 2010; Kingsnorth et al., 1998; LaFree, 1980; Spohn & Spears, 1996) and domestic violence (Worrall et al., 2006). Only recently have "scholars …begun to unravel the complex web of interconnections through which early…events shape [initial] contact with the justice system and feed into inequalities across stages of criminal case processing" (Kurlychek & Johnson, 2019: 292).

Clearance and case screening represent critical stages at which racial disparities may be operating, as the police and prosecutors act as loosely coupled and highly discretionary gatekeepers of justice (Bishop, Leiber, & Johnson, 2010; Leiber & Jamieson, 1995; Petersen, 2017b). Studies of racial inequality across stages such as these can point to disparities that go unnoticed in single-stage studies (Spohn, 2009), or, alternatively, they might provide a lens into how racial disparities are offset by certain case processing decisions (Kutateladze et al., 2014). It may be, for instance, that initial overcharging decisions by prosecutors result in findings demonstrating less punitive responses to Black defendants during later punishment stages (Holmes et al., 1987; Rodriguez, 2010). It might also be that Black victims are neglected at initial punishment stages, and Black defendants experience harsher punishment during later stages in the punishment process (Sommers, Goldstein, & Baskin, 2014). It may be that similar

[6] A number of other studies examine charging outcomes (Albonetti, 1987; Baumer et al., 2000; Beichner & Spohn, 2005; Frazier & Haney, 1996; Spohn & Holleran, 2000), charge reductions (Albonetti, 1992; Bishop & Frazier, 1984; Holmes, Daudistel, & Farrell, 1987), and case dismissals (Adams & Cutshall, 1987; Barnes & Kingsnorth, 1996).

predictors can be used to explain police and prosecutor decisions, or the indicators predicting case processing outcomes might differ.

Overall, complex processes of racial inequalities are difficult to capture in studies that focus on limited sets of variables and single criminal justice stages. In order to frame case processing as a dynamic set of interrelated decision-making points containing various pathways that contribute to disadvantage (Baumer, 2013; Blumstein, Cohen, Martin, & Tonry, 1983; Ulmer, 2012), it is vital to comprehensively investigate how police clearance shapes criminal justice system treatment, and how both victims and suspects are treated within and across case processing stages (Block, 1981; Kutateladze et al., 2015; Sommers et al., 2014; Spohn & Tellis, 2019).

## 1.2 SUMMARY

The current study aims to provide insight into the complex nature of case processing through an examination of the direct effects of race on two important case processing points, as well as moderation effects that have been proposed to affect the relationships between race and criminal justice system treatment. By framing case processing decisions as interrelated, controlling for theoretically relevant constructs, and considering the treatment of victims and suspects, we are better able to understand systems of justice.

On a practical level, we can use research on disparities to promote more effective victim services and crime control (Goldstein, 1982; Herman, 2010; Hoffman, 1983). There is reason to believe that when violence is not taken seriously by criminal justice system actors, victim help-seeking will decrease (Hart & Rennison, 2003; Hotaling,

Buzawa, Zweig, Burt, & Van Ness, 2006), and crime in general will increase due to lowered fear of sanctions, weakening perceptions of state legitimacy, and increases in retaliatory violence (Leovy, 2015; Tankebe, 2009; Meares & Tyler, 2017). Research also suggests that harsh punishment can lead to future crime (Braithwaite, 1989). If disparities in neglect and punishment are pinpointed and lowered, satisfaction with the justice system may be increased and crime can be reduced.

The remainder of the dissertation is structured in the following way. Chapter 2 presents key perspectives underlying criminal justice case processing, pointing to important similarities and distinctions between different subareas of research. It presents gaps and challenges within and across case processing literatures, and discusses the ways in which the dissertation attends to a number of them. Chapter 3 reviews scholarship surrounding the relationship between criminal justice systems, victims, and suspects to reconcile what seem to be equivocal findings regarding racial disparities across criminal justice systems. It then synthesizes existing literature and presents a framework that can be used to more thoroughly examine characteristics associated with case processing across stages and outcomes. Chapter 4 describes the sample, data, and methods used in the dissertation.

Chapter 5 describes clearance, case refusal, and independent variables, as well as the relationships between race and independent and dependent variables. The first stage of analysis involves calculating descriptive statistics for clearance and case screening samples. Clearance analyses use a sample of 4,158 homicides, assaults, robberies, and rapes that occurred in St. Louis, MO between January 1 and December 31, 2015, and case screening models analyze the 1,438 cleared cases that made it from the St. Louis

Metropolitan Police Department to the St. Louis Circuit Attorney's Office by the end of 2018. Chapter 6 examines the effects of race and other theoretically relevant predictors on violent crime clearance and case refusal. Multilevel logistic regression analyses are organized into victim, victim and suspect, and victim-suspect racial dyad categories. To gain broad understandings of each outcome and to allow for comparison, the regression results are separated into clearance and case refusal parts. Each part begins with an analysis of race for each of the different model types (victim characteristics, victim and suspect characteristics, and victim-suspect racial dyads), and then adds additional complaint-, block group-, and police district-level characteristics to examine the effects of race and non-race predictors on the outcomes. The final sets of models examine interactions between victim race and victim-suspect relationship and victim race and crime type to determine whether the effects of race on case processing depend on these case factors. The final chapter summarizes the results of the dissertation, discusses its implications, and suggests important avenues for future research.

# CHAPTER 2

# CONTEXTUALIZING CASE PROCESSING

## 2.1 TRADITIONAL EXPLANATIONS OF CASE PROCESSING

Policing, case screening, and courts subareas of research offer useful explanations of racial disparities in clearance and case screening. As detailed below, the literature on police clearance can be sorted into two categories: devaluation and solvability perspectives (Petersen, 2017a; Vaughn, 2020). Theory and empirical work examining case screening and the courts have typically been characterized by extralegal, legal, and organizational perspectives (Rainville, 2001).

Most police clearance studies center around person and case characteristics. Scholars suggest that clearance rates reflect (a) the solvability of cases (Gottfredson & Hindelang, 1979), and/or (b) the status characteristics of individuals and groups (Black, 1976). More specifically, solvability theories claim that crime clearance is dependent upon organizational characteristics and the situational characteristics of a crime (Puckett & Lundman, 2003; Quinney, 1977; Roberts, 2007), while devaluation theories claim that cases involving disadvantaged, Black individuals and occurring in disadvantaged, Black neighborhoods will be neglected by the police and therefore less likely to be cleared (Black, 1976; Jarvis & Regoeczi, 2009; Petersen, 2017a).

Studies examining prosecutorial and judicial decision-making outcomes focus on case, person, and courtroom characteristics. These studies follow conflict (Chambliss & Seidman, 1971; Quinney, 1970), racial threat (Blalock, 1967; Crawford et al., 1998), uncertainty avoidance/causal attribution (Albonetti, 1991), and focal concerns

(Steffensmeier et al., 1998) perspectives. The most popular of these, the focal concerns perspective, argues that case processing decisions are based on assessments of blame, culpability, and dangerousness, which tend to be associated with underlying stereotypes about offenses, victims, and defendants. While this perspective expects Black defendants to be more harshly punished than non-Black defendants because criminal justice actors view them as more blameworthy and culpable across various case processing stages, it also expects case processing to be influenced by practical constraints and perceptions of victims and communities (Steffensmeier et al., 1998).

### 2.1.1 TRADITIONAL EXPLANATIONS OF POLICE CLEARANCE

*Victim and Group Devaluation*

The traditional victim and group devaluation perspectives follow conflict theories and argue that individuals and communities deemed less valuable in a society will not be prioritized by criminal justice actors (Black, 1976; Garland, 1996; Jarvis & Regoeczi, 2009; Litwin, 2004). Most notable is Donald Black's behavior of law theory, (1976) which argues that crimes involving low-priority victims, such as young, Black, and poor victims, will be provided fewer legal resources than those involving older, White, and wealthy victims. Communities can also be devalued. At the aggregate level, crimes that occur in disadvantaged, Black communities are expected to have lower clearance rates than those that occur in affluent, White communities regardless of the characteristics of the victim. The devaluation perspective therefore expects that the low clearance rate of crimes committed against Black victims and in predominately Black areas can be explained, in part, by the willful decisions of the police.

*Solvability*

Critics of the devaluation hypothesis suggest that lower clearance rates among persons and places are not an automatic indicator of devaluation. Instead, crimes involving Black victims and those that occur in disadvantaged, Black neighborhoods are less likely to be cleared because they are more difficult to solve (Litwin, 2004; Litwin & Xu, 2007). Solvability theories claim that crime clearance is dependent upon a large range of policing characteristics and the situational characteristics of a crime (Puckett & Lundman, 2003; Quinney, 1977; Roberts, 2007). Police workloads and resources are expected to directly affect clearance. Rooted in Klinger's (1997) argument about patrol officers, as detective workloads increase, we can expect resources to be strained and the pressure to work efficiently to increase among officers, causing them to dedicate less time to individual incidents (Puckett & Lundman, 2003). Police districts also experience pressures by their departments and the public to focus their attention on solving serious violent crimes such as homicides (Bynum, Cordner, & Green, 1982; Gottfredson & Hindelang, 1979). Situational factors, such as the presence or absence of firearms, physical evidence, and information from witnesses, are also particularly important to consider in studies of crime clearance because they affect officers' ability to clear crimes (Geberth, 1996; Litwin, 2004; Riedel & Rinehart, 1996).

*Empirical Evidence Examining Devaluation and Solvability*

Empirical research examining the relationship between person and community extralegal factors and arrest clearance suggests mixed findings. When both devaluation and solvability characteristics are included in studies, results appear complex. Importantly, agency and situational characteristics of incidents have been found to be

stronger predictors of clearance than race (Taylor et al., 2009), and relationships between devaluation characteristics and clearance appear to change over time (Litwin & Xu, 2007). Table 1 presents key variables and examples of findings that have been related to race in studies of clearance.

**Table 1. Summary of Literature Examining Police Clearance**

| Concept (UoA) | Relevant Constructs and Findings | Studies |
|---|---|---|
| People (Case) | **Victim sex:** Results are inconclusive. | **Females +** (McEwen & Regoeczi, 2015; Regoeczi et al., 2000); **NS** (Addington, 2006; Mouzous & Muller, 2001); **Males +** (Litwin & Xu, 2007) |
| | **Victim race:** Results are inconclusive. | **White +** (Alderden & Lavery, 2007; Lee, 2005; Roberts & Lyons, 2011); **Non-White + (**Regoeczi et al., 2000; Wolfgang, 1958); **NS** ( Jiao, 2007; Litwin & Xu, 2007) |
| | **Victim/offender racial dyads:** Cases involving White victims and offenders have high clearance levels. | Roberts & Lyons, 2009; Taylor et al., 2009 |
| Place (Community; City) | **Racial composition**: Homicides are less likely to be cleared in areas with large Black populations. | Litwin & Xu, 2007; Petersen 2017a **–** (Borg & Parker, 2001); **NS** (Litwin, 2004; Puckett & Lundman, 2003) |
| | **Homicide rates:** Results are inconclusive. | |
| Incident (Case) | **Weapon type:** Crimes involving firearms are less likely to be cleared than those committed with personal weapons or knives. | Addington, 2006; Litwin, 2004; Mouzos & Muller, 2001; Puckett & Lundman, 2003; Rydberg & Pizarro, 2014 |
| | **Incidents with concomitant serious offenses**: Homicides committed during the course of other crimes (e.g., rape, robbery) are less likely to be cleared than those committed under other circumstances. | Lee, 2005; Litwin, 2004; Petersen, 2017a; Riedel & Rinehart, 1996; Roberts, 2007 |
| | **Crime type**: Homicides have higher clearance levels than assaults, and robberies have low clearance levels compared to assaults. | Taylor et al., 2009; Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2017; Vaughn, 2020 |
| | **Victim-offender relationship**: Cases involving offenders that are known to the victim are cleared more often than those involving strangers or persons unknown to the victim. | Lee, 2005; Vaughn, 2020 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Forensic evidence:** Results are inconclusive. | **NS** (Peterson, Sommers, Baskin, & Johnson, 2010; Schroeder & White, 2009); **–** (McEwen & Regoezci, 2015); **+** (McEwen & Regoezci, 2015) |
| | **Motive**: Drug- and gang-related crimes have low clearance rates. | Jiao, 2007; Lee, 2005; Pastia, Davies, & Wu, 2017 |
| | **Witnesses**: Crimes involving witnesses have higher clearance likelihoods than those that do not involve witnesses. | McEwen & Regoeczi, 2015; Schroeder & White, 2009 |
| Workload/ Resources (Detective) | **Number of detectives assigned to case**: Results are inconclusive. | **+** (Wellford & Cronin, 1999); **NS** (Rinehart, 1994) |
| | **Detective caseload**: As detective caseload increases, clearance decreases. | Borg & Parker, 2001; Chaiken, Greenwood, & Petersilia, 1977; Liska, Chamlin, & Reed, 1985; but see Rinehart, 1994 |
| | **Investigative/organizational effort**: As investigative effort increases, clearance increases. | Abrahams et al., 2011; Cook et al., 2019; Braga & Dusseault, 2018; Fallik, 2017; Hawk, 2015; Schroeder & White, 2009; Wellford & Cronin, 1999 |

*Victim Devaluation*. A number of studies have demonstrated that non-White victims are denied the same levels of protection offered to White victims (Addington, 2007; Alderden & Lavery, 2007; Lee, 2005; Marché, 1994; Regoeczi, Jarvis, & Riedel, 2008; Roberts & Lyons, 2009; Smith, Visher, & Davidson, 1984). For instance, Lee's (2005) examination of 9,442 homicides in Los Angeles County over a five-year period (1990-1994) finds that cases involving non-White victims are 30 percent less likely to be solved than ones involving White victims. Crimes involving Hispanic victims have also been found to be less likely to be cleared than ones involving non-Hispanic victims (Alderden & Lavery, 2007; Litwin, 2004; Roberts & Lyons, 2011). Litwin's (2004) study of homicide clearances in Chicago (1989-1991) found lower clearance likelihoods for Latino versus White victims, but no significant clearance differences between Black and White victims. Similarly, while Alderden and Lavery's (2007) study of homicide

clearance in Chicago (1991 – 2002) found no significant clearance differences between Black and White victims' cases, it showed that Hispanic victims' cases were significantly less likely than White victims' cases to be cleared. Further, Roberts and Lyon's (2011) study of 2000-2007 NIBRS homicide clearance found lower clearances for cases involving Hispanic victims compared to cases involving non-Hispanic White or non-Hispanic Black victims. These studies shed light on the importance of including ethnicity variables in analyses, and of separating Hispanic and Black populations in communities with significant proportions of Hispanic individuals.

*Group Devaluation*. Some research findings support group devaluation. For instance, crimes occurring in economically disadvantaged communities (Litwin & Xu, 2007; Mancik, Parker, & Williams, 2018; Paré, Felson, & Ouimet, 2007), large, urban areas (Paré et al., 2007), and areas with large non-White populations (Litwin & Xu, 2007; Petersen, 2017a) appear to have low clearance rates. In their city-level analysis, Borg and Parker (2001) found a negative relationship between homicide clearance and homicide rates and positive associations between homicide clearance and residential stability, educational attainment, expenditures for educational programs, and racial disparities in education income, residence, and employment.

*Victim and Group Devaluation*. When victim factors and neighborhood characteristics are considered together in relation to clearance, results become less clear. There is evidence suggesting that neighborhood characteristics account for victim race characteristics (Petersen, 2017a; Puckett & Lundman, 2003). For instance, Puckett and Lundman's (2003) study of 802 homicides that occurred in Columbus, OH between 1984 and 1992 finds that homicides committed in predominately Black neighborhoods are less

likely to be cleared than ones committed in predominately White neighborhoods, and does not find significant relationships between victim devaluation factors and clearance. Other studies find that victim characteristics and neighborhood contexts are correlated with clearance, suggesting that both types of characteristics are important. In their study of Chicago homicides from 1966 to 1995, Litwin and Xu (2007) find that victim race and community characteristics, such as economic disadvantage, are significant predictors of clearance. Litwin and Xu's (2007) study is important because it suggests that, in addition to case, neighborhood, and jurisdictional characteristics, historical conditions might impact clearance. Studies from different time periods might therefore demonstrate different findings regarding devaluation, suggesting that future studies of case processing should account for historical context.

It is difficult to study offender characteristics and clearance in tandem since the relationship between the two is at least partially endogenous. Knowledge about offender characteristics is likely to lead to clearance, making clearance a function of knowledge of offenders (Regoeczi & Jarvis, 2013). Studies that have looked at offender and victim characteristics in relation to clearance find mixed results regarding racial differences, though crimes involving White victims and offenders appear to have the greatest clearance likelihood (Roberts & Lyons, 2009; Taylor et al., 2009). Importantly, victim behaviors have been found to affect police behavior in handling crime more than offender behaviors. For example, in his analysis of police officers' mediation, separation, and arrest behaviors, Smith (1987) found that the police are significantly less likely to arrest

suspects who have victimized Black or female individuals, and significantly more likely to arrest a suspect when a victim requests formal action.[7]

*Devaluation and Solvability*. Studies that investigate the relationship between solvability and clearance demonstrate the importance of controlling for police actions and organizational characteristics. The findings from early studies of criminal investigations were mixed (Eck, 1992), with some studies finding support for the notion that criminal investigations are important for clearance (Bloch & Bell, 1976; Bloch & Weidman, 1975; Ward, 1971) and others finding that case circumstances trump police effort (Ericson, 1982; Reiss, 1971; Reiss & Bordua, 1967). In 1973, the RAND Corporation undertook a national study of violent and property crime clearance among police departments with 150 or more employees to determine the impact of various investigation activities on police effectiveness. Results from the landmark study demonstrated that while investigators did not spend much time solving crimes, the actions of patrol officers and members of the public were instrumental in clearing crimes (Chaiken, 1975; Chaiken, Greenwood, & Petersilia, 1977; Greenwood & Petersilia, 1975; Greenwood et al., 1975).

Subsequent studies have found that investigations are important for clearing crimes (Abrahams et al., 2011; Eck, 1983; Braga & Dusseault, 2018), and that particular elements of investigation, such as information from the public and the role of the patrol officer, are critical components of investigations (Horvath, Meesig, & Lee, 2001). A number of studies find results that are in contrast to those found by the RAND

[7] Studies that examine outcomes other than clearance, and that consider the range of choices available to the police in handling crime, are important in pointing to potential disparities in punitiveness. Smith (1987) found, for instance, that police are less likely to act punitively in encounters involving Non-White individuals as opposed to Whites, and that conflicts that occur within the home (i.e., domestic conflicts) are likely to be resolved via mediation.

Corporation. For example, studies have demonstrated negative relationships between detective workloads and clearance (Borg & Parker, 2001; Chaiken et al., 1977; Liska, Chamlin, & Reed, 1985). Researchers have also found investigative effort and clearance to be positively associated with one another (Abrahams et al., 2011; Braga & Dusseault, 2018; Fallik, 2017; Hawk, 2015; McEwen & Regoeczi, 2015; Schroeder & White, 2009; Wellford & Cronin, 1999). A recent study by Cook, Braga, Turchan, and Barao (2019) predicted what would have happened to investigations if they were provided different levels of effort and resources. The study found investigative effort at the scene of a crime and during the first 48 hours following a crime to be especially important for clearance.

Situational variables, such as physical evidence, have also been found to increase the odds of clearance (Keel, Jarvis, & Muirhead, 2009; Litwin, 2004; Roberts, 2007). Because they do not require close contact between victims and offenders, and because they often lack sufficient physical evidence, crimes involving firearms and incidents involving strangers have low likelihoods of clearance (Litwin, 2004; Litwin & Xu, 2007; Regoeczi et al., 2000; Rydberg & Pizarro, 2014). In contrast, crimes involving knives and personal weapons such as fists, and ones involving offenders that are known to the victim, are more likely to be cleared (Addington, 2006; Mouzos & Muller, 2001; Puckett & Lundman, 2003; Regoeczi, 2018; Roberts, 2007). Homicides tend to have higher clearance levels than assaults, and robberies have particularly low clearance rates (Taylor et al., 2009; Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2017). Research by Cook et al. (2019) also suggests interesting interactions between situational features. The researchers found that homicides involving firearms were significantly more likely to be cleared than assaults

with guns, and differences in clearance were largely explained by differences in effort to obtain witness cooperation, forensic evidence, and quick arrests.

Taken together, empirical evidence suggests that a large range of solvability features – apart from victim characteristics – can be linked to crime clearance. While data limitations have made it difficult to explain the influence of police variables on crime (Wellford, Lum, Scott, Vovak, & Scherer, 2019), comprehensive studies of case, investigative effort, and organizational variables are needed to determine the factors underlying crime clearance. In addition to examining police investigative activities, the ways in which organizational contexts influence these activities, and the influence of specific case variables on clearance, researchers must examine multiple jurisdictions that differ in rates of clearance (Wellford et al., 2019).

Importantly, studies that analyze more complete conceptual frameworks and include variables relating to incidents and police have produced inconclusive results regarding the associations between race and clearance. For example, situational variables, such as physical evidence and witness participation, have been found in some instances to increase the odds of clearance above and beyond victim and neighborhood status characteristics (Keel et al., 2009; Litwin, 2004; Roberts, 2007).

In studies examining the most extreme form of crime, homicide, race often is not shown to be a significant correlate of clearance (Addington, 2006; Jiao, 2007; Puckett & Lundman, 2003; Litwin & Xu, 2007; McEwen & Regoeczi, 2015; Mouzos & Muller, 2001; Petersen, 2017a). In a number of instances, the null effects of race become evident only when specific case, neighborhood, and/or agency-level characteristics are controlled for. A recent study of Los Angeles murder cases, for instance, found that the odds of

clearance for Black victims' cases are about 19 percent lower than those of White victims' cases (Petersen, 2017a). Race effects became nonsignificant, however, when neighborhood and agency-level characteristics were included in the model. Puckett and Lundman (2003) found that homicide visibility and detectives' prioritization of homicides influence clearance above and beyond factors such as victim race. Recent work also suggests that the relationship between victim race and clearance may vary across time. Litwin and Xu (2007) found that between 1986 and 1995, cases involving Black victims were significantly less likely than White victims' crimes to be cleared, and race effects were non-significant during earlier time periods (1966-1975; 1978-1985;). Their study is particularly germane to the present one because it demonstrates an increasing influence of race on clearance, even when controlling for offense and neighborhood characteristics. It again, however, points to the importance of studying clearance across time periods.

In some instances, the direction of the relationship between race and clearance changes when solvability characteristics are controlled for. Regoeczi et al. (2000) and Wolfgang (1958) found that cases involving non-White victims were more likely to be cleared than those involving White victims. Though the effects of victim race were found to be quite small when controlling for the circumstances surrounding offenses and weapons, Regoeczi et al.'s (2000) study is important in demonstrating the complexity of findings regarding race. In his analysis of Los Angeles County homicides, Petersen (2017a) found racial composition at the neighborhood level to be important for clearance, even when solvability characteristics were considered. But he also found a positive relationship between clearance and concentrated disadvantage (measured as a factor score

combining percent of families below the poverty lines, percent of families receiving public assistance, percent unemployed, and percent of female-headed families with children), suggesting evidence in contrast to group devaluation. In subsequent models that excluded cases that are easy to solve, however, concentrated disadvantage became nonsignificant, suggesting that neighborhood characteristics might be less important in cases requiring significant attention and resources from the police. Importantly, these studies are limited to explaining homicide. The implications of this are discussed below.

A number of studies have found that homicides involving Black victims are as likely or more likely to be cleared than homicides involving victims of other races (Riedel & Rinehart, 1996; Wellford & Cronin 1999). But recent research suggests that victim race might have as large or more of an impact on crime clearance than other devaluation and solvability characteristics for crimes other than homicides, highlighting the importance of studying a diverse range of crime types (Jarvis, Mancik, & Regoeczi, 2017; Taylor et al., 2009). In their study of homicides, rapes, robberies, and assaults, Taylor et al. (2009) demonstrated that while victims of different races experience similar clearance levels for homicides, rapes, and robberies, White victims were significantly more likely than Black victims to have their aggravated assaults cleared. Roberts and Lyons (2009) found that in assault cases, incidents involving non-White offenders and victims had low clearance likelihoods, and the effects of race on clearance were smaller for homicides than aggravated assault. Further, Briggs and Opsal (2012) found that while robberies and aggravated assaults involving Black victims were less likely to be cleared than those involving non-Black victims, racial differences did not influence the clearance of sexual assaults. While in contrast to the victim devaluation thesis, findings suggesting

that Black victims' cases have homicide clearance rates that are similar to cases involving victims of other races are in line with the argument that police officers must devote a great amount of effort to violent crimes such as homicides (Bynum, Cordner, & Green, 1982; Gottfredson & Hindelang, 1979; Puckett & Lundman, 2003). Jarvis et al. (2017: 5) found that police effort to clear crime is largely dependent on offense type, leading them to conclude that "results from previous studies on homicide case outcomes are not applicable to other types of violent crimes."

Importantly, then, while solvability and devaluation characteristics may be important on their own, they likely interact with one another to impact clearance. Crimes involving Black victims tend to occur in higher crime areas, where officers may struggle with higher caseloads (Borg & Parker, 2001; LaFree, Baumer, & O'Brien, 2010; Leovy, 2015; Ousey & Lee, 2010). This may explain why Black victims' cases tend to have lower odds of clearance. Though witnesses can increase crime clearance likelihood, witness effects might be dependent on community factors. Regoeczi and Jarvis (2013) find that the effects of having witnesses to homicides are less in disadvantaged neighborhoods characterized by high levels of poverty, unemployment, and female-headed households. In other words, and in contrast to recent journalistic accounts suggesting that a major clearance issue involves lack of witnesses (Leovy, 2015; Smith, 2019), witness involvement appears to be less critical for clearing homicides that occur in disadvantaged neighborhoods. As noted above, the influence of victim characteristics on clearance may be especially dependent on crime type, which has been categorized as a solvability characteristic.

### 2.1.2 TRADITIONAL EXPLANATIONS OF PROSECUTORIAL CASE SCREENING AND COURT CASE PROCESSING

Unlike clearance research which largely focuses on incident and victim factors, prosecutor and court case processing research focuses on case, defendant, and criminal justice actor characteristics. Whereas police clearance research has been categorized into devaluation and solvability perspectives, existing research examining prosecutor decision-making has been sorted into extralegal, legal, and resource perspectives (Rainville, 2001).

#### *Extralegal Influences*

Extralegal factors include characteristics such as race, lifestyle, sex, and age of defendants, victims, and witnesses, that, under most circumstances, should not affect prosecutorial decision-making. Conflict and racial threat theories have been useful in explaining the operation of such factors in the courtroom.[8] The conflict perspective posits that while individuals and groups hold conflicting views and values, social institutions develop and perpetuate existing societal power structures and therefore benefit the powerful (Chambliss & Seidman, 1971; Liska, 1992; Quinney, 1970). Conflict theorists assert that a society's most powerful groups actively discriminate against minorities via the criminal justice system (Barkan & Cohn, 1994; Mann, 1987, 1993; Wright, 1987; Zatz, 1987). Proponents of this perspective expect Black defendants to receive more

[8] It has, however, been argued that extralegal variables, such as lifestyle and language, can become legally relevant (Adams & Cutshall, 1987).

punitive sentences than White defendants even when controlling for factors such as offense type and prior criminal history.[9]

Minority group threat theory revises conflict theory and is based on the premise that dominant groups will attempt to preserve their power when they *perceive* subordinate groups, such as racial minorities, as threatening to the existing social order (Blalock, 1967; Blumer, 1958; King & Wheelock, 2007; Quillian, 1995). Racial threat, a specific outgrowth of the minority group threat perspective, is useful in explaining why we might expect racial disparities to operate at the community level. Racial threat posits that where racial minority groups are large, dominant groups will enact stronger methods of informal (Tolnay, Deane & Beck, 1996) and formal (Jackson, 1989; Liska, 1992) social control. As Black population size grows, pressure to protect White communities is expected to grow (Ulmer & Johnson, 2004). Thus, we can expect community-level racial composition to influence prosecutor and judge decision-making (Pinchevsky & Steiner, 2016; Sutton, 2013; Williams & Rosenfeld, 2016).

*Legal and Resource Influences*

Works by Wolfgang and Riedel (1973) and Hagan (1974) challenged the idea that extralegal factors were the strongest predictors of court outcomes, and prompted the consideration of two other important predictors of case processing – legal and resource-oriented factors – in studies of court decision-making processes. Legal factors include specific characteristics of cases, such as offense seriousness and available evidence,

[9] Conflict theory has been criticized, most notably because "the evidence on personal and property crimes points to legal variables as the prime determinants of criminal justice processing" and "elites do not form a unitary whole, monopolize decision-making, or appear particularly vulnerable to the objective threats of subordinates" (Liska, 1987; Tittle, 1994, as cited in Sampson & Lauritsen, 1997: 357).

which can impact prosecutors' decisions to file charges (Albonetti, 1987; Frase, 1980; Jacoby, Mellon, Ratledge, & Turner, 1982). Resource-oriented variables are those that affect the time, money, and energy a prosecutor can devote to a case (Rainville, 2001). One of the strengths of uncertainty avoidance (Albonetti, 1986), causal attribution (Albonetti, 1991), and focal concerns perspectives (Steffensmeier et al., 1998) is their consideration of extralegal, legal, and resource variables.

Uncertainty avoidance and causal attribution perspectives highlight the importance of rational choice and internal logics of avoiding uncertainty (Albonetti, 1987, 1992; March & Simon, 1958; Thompson, 1967). These perspectives argue that criminal justice system actors, such as police officers and prosecutors, use their discretion to attempt to remove uncertainty from their decisions. According to Albonetti (1987: 2), "the decision to 'go forward' with …charges is made within a social-definitional context emerging from uncertainty along [various] dimensions," such as underlying technical operations in the criminal justice system, concerns about achievement and reputation, and outcomes of cases that are typically uncertain (see also Albonetti, 1992; Cyert & March, 1963; March & Simon, 1958). Since prosecutors are judged by their ability to convict individuals, they will be more likely to accept – and less likely to refuse – cases that they believe will be successfully prosecuted. Causal attribution theory argues that "attributions provide a basis for arriving at rational decision in a domain of responsibility characterized by uncertainty" (Albonetti, 1991: 250). In an attempt to achieve "bounded rationality," court actors use stereotypes about crimes (e.g., weapon, crime type) and offenders (e.g., defendant race, prior record) to inform their responses (i.e., criminal punishment) to negatively valued behaviors (i.e., crime; Albonetti, 1991; Carroll &

Payne, 1976; Hawkins, 1980, 1981; Heider, 1958; March & Simon, 1958; Shaver, 1975). Uncertainty avoidance and causal attribution theories can be used to explain why court actors might develop "patterned responses" in attempting to judge the likelihood of an offender committing future crime (Albonetti, 1991).

The focal concerns perspective incorporates elements from Albonetti's uncertainty avoidance (1986) and causal attribution (1991) theories, arguing that criminal justice actors base case processing decisions on information about offense, victim, and defendant characteristics (Steffensmeier et al., 1993; Steffensmeier et al., 1998; Ulmer, 2012). The perspective predicts decision-making to be based on three primary sets of factors: defendant blameworthiness; defendant dangerousness and community protection; and practical constraints and consequences connected to punishment decisions. Since criminal justice actors rarely have all necessary information needed to make decisions about cases, they develop and utilize "perceptual shorthands" based on attributions and stereotypes in making decisions (Albonetti, 1991; Hawkins, 1981, Steffensmeier et al., 1998). Focal concerns theory expects increased perception of risk in cases involving people of color.

Prosecutors are viewed within this framework as largely concerned about the practical consequences of conviction likelihood, and how cases will be evaluated by judges and jurors (Frohmann, 1997; Holleran et al., 2010). Importantly, then, they "consider not only the legally relevant indicators of case seriousness and offender culpability but also the background, character, and behavior of the victims; the relationships between suspects and victims; and the willingness of victims to cooperate as the cases move forward" (Holleran et al., 2010: 390).

Prosecutor decision-making might also be affected by prosecutors' judgements about the communities in which crimes occur (Pinchevsky & Steiner, 2016). Community factors, such as racial composition, unemployment, and crime rate, might especially influence decision-making in areas such as St. Louis, where prosecutors are elected by local residents (Britt, 2000; Johnson, 2006; Lynch, 2011; Peterson & Hagan, 1984; Williams, 2018; Ulmer & Johnson, 2004).

*Empirical Evidence Examining Extralegal, Legal, and Resource Factors*

As is the case in studies of clearance, evidence of racial and ethnic disparities in prosecutorial and judicial decision-making is mixed. Mixed results point to the importance of having a model that includes extralegal, legal, and resource influences in studies of decision-making (Kutateladze et al., 2014; Kutateladze et al., 2012). Table 2 demonstrates key variables with examples of findings relating to prosecutorial decision-making.

**Table 2. Summary of Literature Examining Prosecutorial Screening**

| Concept (UoA) | Relevant Construct and Findings | Studies |
|---|---|---|
| People (Case) | **Victim race:** Cases involving Black victims are less likely to be prosecuted than ones involving non-Black victims. | Kingsnorth et al., 1998; Pyrooz et al., 2011; Spohn et al., 2001; Sorensen & Wallace, 1999 |
| | **Victim and witness credibility/deservedness**: Cases with nontraditional norms or victim provocation will be less likely to be prosecuted. | Albonetti, 1987; LaFree, 1989; Spohn & Spears, 1996; Stanko, 1981 |
| | **Victim-suspect/victim-defendant racial dyads:** Results are inconclusive. | **Non-White +** (LaFree, 1980); **NS** or **Non-White –** (Holleran et al., 2010; Spohn & Spears, 1996) |
| | **Suspect race:** Results are inconclusive for case processing outcomes other than sentencing.[10] | **Non-White +** (Kutateladze et al., 2014; Schlesinger, 2013); **Non-White –** (Bishop et al., 2010; Omori, 2019); **NS** |

[10] White and Asian people have been found to be sentenced more leniently than other non-White people (Baumer, 2013; Johnson & Betsinger, 2009; Mitchell, 2005).

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | (Kramer & Wang, 2019; Shermer & Johnson, 2010) |
| | **Suspect prior criminal history:** Cases involving suspects with prior criminal histories are more likely to be accepted for prosecution. | Albonetti, 1987; Baumer et al., 2000 |
| Place (Community; City; District; County) | **Racial composition**: Cases in counties with higher proportions of non-Whites are less likely to be prosecuted.[11] | Baumer et al., 2000; Franklin, 2010 |
| | **Violent crime rates:** Results are inconclusive for case processing outcomes other than sentencing.[12] | Franklin, 2010 |
| | **Socioeconomic status**: Results are inconclusive.[13] | Johnson et al., 2008; Wooldredge & Thistlethwaite, 2004 |
| Incident (Case) | **Attorney type:** Results are inconclusive. | Hartley et al., 2010; Holmes et al. 1996 |
| | **Crime type**: Serious crimes are likely to be accepted for prosecution. | Frase, 1980; Jacoby et al., 1982 |
| | **Victim-suspect/victim-defendant relationship**: Results are inconclusive. | **Stranger +** (Chandler & Torney, 1981; Kerstetter, 1990); **Stranger – or NS** (Simon, 1996; Spears & Spohn, 1996, 1997) |
| | **Police evidence:** As police evidence increases, the likelihood of prosecuting increases. | Feeney, Dill, & Weir, 1983; McEwen & Regoeczi, 2015; Nagel & Hagan, 1983; Spohn & Holleran, 2001 |
| | **Weapons:** Cases involving weapons are more likely to be prosecuted than ones that do not involve weapons. | Kerstetter, 1990; Spohn & Holleran, 2001 |
| | **Witnesses**: Crimes involving witnesses have higher prosecution likelihoods than those that do not involve witnesses. | Albonetti, 1987; Spohn & Spears, 1996 |
| Workload/ Resources (Prosecutor; Court) | **Prosecutor policies:** Results are inconclusive. | Boland & Forst, 1985; Rainville, 2001 |
| | **Prosecutor workload**: Results are inconclusive and suggest that prosecutor workload may be context-dependent. | Forst & Bushway, 2010; Kutateladze et al., 2015; Stemen & Escobar, 2018 |
| | **Court caseloads**: Large caseloads are associated with decreased punishment. | Hester & Sevigny, 2016; Johnson et al., 2008; Ulmer & Johnson, 2004 |

[11] Sentencing disparities appear to be larger in areas with large or growing minority populations (Ulmer et al., 2007; Ulmer & Johnson, 2004; Wang & Mears, 2010; but see Crawford et al., 1998 & Ulmer, 1997).
[12] Communities with high violent crime rates experience increases in case dismissal odds (Franklin, 2010). Race effects in sentencing are more significant in areas with low violent crime rates (Crawford et al., 1998).
[13] Suspects/defendants from high-SES areas are more likely to have case acceptance and full prosecution (Wooldredge & Thistlethwaite, 2004). County-level poverty is positively associated with case dismissal (Franklin, 2010).

*Extralegal Factors*. Characteristics that are considered extralegal in the courts literature, such as victim-offender relationship (Albonetti, 1987; Cannavale & Falcon, 1976; Forst, Lucianovic, & Cox, 1977; Spears & Spohn, 1997; Stanko, 1981, 1982) and offender characteristics (Adams & Cutshall, 1987; Spears & Spohn, 1997; Stanko, 1981, 1982), have been found to impact post-clearance decision-making and prosecutorial case screening in particular. Court actors have been found to hold more punitive attitudes about and behave more punitively against people of color, particularly Black individuals (Crawford et al., 1998; King & Wheelock, 2007). When motivated by shifting population demographics or other indicators of group threat, decisions to disproportionately prosecute and punish Black defendants' crimes are regarded as evidence of racial threat.

At the macro level, as minority populations grow, fear of crime may increase and attitudes towards people of color may become more punitive (Bobo & Hutchings, 1996; Chiricos, McEntire, & Gertz, 2001; Liska & Chamlin, 1984; Taylor, 1998), leading to changes in criminal justice system budgets and operations (Campbell, Vogel, & Williams, 2015; Jacobs & Helms, 1999; Liska & Chamlin, 1984; Liska, Chamlin, & Reed, 1985; Parker, Stults, & Rice, 2005; Stucky, Heimer, & Lang, 2007). King and Wheelock (2007), in a study of 1,103 U.S. adults, found that individual perceptions of Black residents as threatening to economic resources strongly predicted punitive attitudes about the courts, prison sentences, and the death penalty. When survey respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed with three indicators of punitive attitudes: the courts are too lenient with criminals, we need tougher prison sentences for repeat offenders, and a person convicted of murder should receive the death penalty, individuals located in areas with higher unemployment rates and places that experienced a recent

Black population increases were found to be significantly more punitive. This effect was mediated by White respondents' view of Black residents as threatening to material resources, suggesting support for the idea of racial threat.[14]

The methodologies and theoretical mechanisms underlying conflict case processing studies are limited in some respects (Hagan, 1974; Kleck, 1981; Spohn, 2015). It is vital that studies control for important characteristics, isolate the effect of race on case processing, and importantly for the project, consider the notion that "the meaning of race varies, and that, despite simplistic interpretations of conflict theory, both differential severity and leniency are possible" (Peterson & Hagan, 1984: 67).

*Legal and Resource Factors*. Legal variables, such as quality of police evidence (Spears & Spohn, 1997), witness credibility (Myers & Hagan, 1979), seriousness of an offense (Albonetti, 1987; Frase, 1980; Jacoby et al., 1982; Myers & Hagan, 1979), and defendant prior criminal record (Adams & Cutshall, 1987; Albonetti, 1987; Neubauer, 1974) have been found to impact prosecutorial decisions.[15] For instance, offense seriousness has been positively correlated with prosecutorial case acceptance (Albonetti, 1987; Frase, 1980; Jacoby et al., 1982), and cases involving weapons tend to have higher prosecution likelihoods than ones that do not (Albonetti, 1987). Victim-defendant relationship has in some instances been designated as a legal factor, and it has been found to influence prosecutorial decisions (Vera Institute of Justice, 1981).[16]

[14]Attitudes regarding material resources were assessed using the following statement: "African Americans take away resources that should go to others, like jobs and welfare."
[15] For more evidence of quality of police evidence impacting prosecutorial decision-making, see also Albonetti, 1987; Boland, Mahanna, and Sones, 1992; Feeney, Dill, and Weir, 1983; and Forst et al., 1977.
[16] For more evidence of this correlation, see Battelle Memorial Institute Law and Justice Center, 1977; McCahill, Myer, and Fischman, 1979; Miller, 1969; Newman, 1966; and Stanko, 1982.

Resource variables have been found to affect prosecutor decision-making in different ways (Boland & Forst, 1985; Mellon, Jacoby, & Brewer, 1981; Rainville, 2001). One important variable that might impact prosecutorial decision-making is a prosecutor's average caseload. Prosecutors with high numbers of cases may operate like the police in the sense that they be inclined to avoid creating larger case backlogs (Dixon, 1995; Engen & Steen, 2000), and to prosecute more serious offenses, such as homicide or robbery, because they feel pressured to do so (Bynum et al., 1982; Gottfredson & Hindelang, 1979; Marché, 1994; Puckett & Lundman, 2003; Regoeczi et al., 2000; Ulmer & Johnson, 2004).

Wooldredge's (1989) study sheds light on the importance of examining caseload pressures in the context of resource differences, and considering structural and procedural factors in studies. In his examination of the caseload pressure hypothesis, he found that as felony caseloads increase, felony guilty plea rates rise until a threshold is reached. Once the threshold is reached, pressure increases actually corresponded with lower guilty plea rates. This finding was stable across Illinois circuit courts over a period of over 10 years (1973-1984). Wooldredge's study also found that quality of pretrial screening procedures and court systems' structural sizes were more important in influencing felony guilty plea rates than available case processing resources. Further, he found the quality of felonies processed to be equally important as resources for impacting plea rates.

Practical constraints appear to be context-dependent (Kutateladze et al., 2015). Whereas Ulmer et al. (Ulmer & Bradley, 2006; Ulmer, Eisenstein, & Johnson, 2010) found higher court caseloads to be associated with higher punishments for going to trial as opposed to pleading guilty, and Bushway, Redlich, and Norris (2014) found that

prosecutors base decisions about pleas on trial costs, Kutateladze et al. (2015) did not find district attorney caseload to impact charge offers or sentence offers (once evidence was controlled for). Kutateladze and colleagues (2015) suggest that the influence of practical constraints may depend on jurisdictional considerations. For instance, prosecutors in New York may be used to having high caseloads, and this might explain why caseload amounts did not affect the decisions of their prosecutors. The effects of practical constraints on prosecutorial decision-making may also depend on the constraint and criminal justice outcome in question (Kutateladze et al., 2015; Stemen & Escober, 2018). In a study of 318,000 felony and misdemeanor cases in Wisconsin, Stemen and Escobar (2018) found that although prosecutor caseload pressures affect guilty plea outcomes, they do not affect case dismissals.

*Extralegal, Legal, and Resource Factors*. Most empirical studies that examine legal, extralegal, and resource variables assess sentencing, the last punishment decision (Crawford et al., 1998; Johnson, 2003; Kramer & Steffensmeier, 1993; Peterson & Hagan, 1984; Spohn, Gruhl, & Welch, 1981; Spohn & Holleran, 2000; Steen, Engen, & Gainey, 2005; Steffensmeier et al., 1998; Zatz, 1984). Some studies show that sentencing is influenced by legal factors, such as crime type and evidence, and extralegal factors, such as race (Mitchell, 2005; Spohn, 2000; Zatz, 2000). As is the case with clearance, however, studies that simultaneously examine a wide variety of predictors produce equivocal results.

In contrast to the devaluation approach taken in clearance research, Black defendants have been found to receive longer sentences than White defendants even when controlling for factors such as offense type and prior criminal history (LaFree,

1980; Lizotte, 1978; Nelson, 1994; Petersilia, 1983, 1985; Spohn et al., 1981; Ulmer, Painter-Davis, & Tinik, 2016; Unnever, 1982; Unnever, Frazier, & Henretta, 1980). Though Black defendants have often experienced prior victimization, they are viewed as more culpable, deserving of punishment, threatening to communities and able to endure harsh punishment (Daly, 1994; Steffensmeier et al, 1998). Studies of outcome-specific disadvantage (Demuth, 2003; Steffensmeier et al., 1998) and cumulative disadvantage (Diprete & Eirich, 2006; Hagan, 1974; Spohn, 2009; Stolzenberg, D'Alessio, & Eitle, 2013; Sutton, 2013) support the idea that non-White defendants are disadvantaged when controlling for important legal and resource variables. But other studies bring into question these race effects (Kutateladze et al., 2014). Some find that race is an important predictor of case processing outcomes (Albonetti, 1997; Crawford et al., 1998; Frederick & Stemen, 2012; Free, 2002; Kramer & Steffensmeier, 1993; Sorensen & Wallace, 1999; Ulmer et al., 2007). Others fail to find race effects (Albonetti, 1992; Engen & Gainey, 2000; Franklin, 2010; Shermer & Johnson, 2010) or find that non-White defendants are in fact advantaged in case processing (Bernstein, Kelly, & Doyle, 1977; Holmes, Daudistel, & Farrell, 1987; Myers & Talarico, 1986; Wooldredge & Thistlethwaite, 2004). Further, race effects are often diminished when legal factors, such as offense type and prior record, are controlled for (Hagan, 1973; Kleck, 1981; Myers & Hagan, 1979).

While most research has focused on suspect or defendant characteristics and their associations with single case processing decisions, some notable studies have given attention to victims (Baumer et al., 2000; Cannavale & Falcon, 1976; Hall, 1975; Myers & Hagan, 1979; Spears & Spohn, 1997; Stanko, 1977, 1981; Williams, 1976) and case processing outcomes in the context of earlier decisions (Shermer & Johnson, 2010;

Wilmot & Spohn, 2004). Some studies find that courts are more lenient in cases involving non-White victims, possibly because "[i]f prosecutors are less confident about winning cases that involve disreputable victims, they may be more likely to reject these cases at first screening, to drop those which are indicted via a nolle prosequi motion, or to push for plea negotiations rather than proceeding to trial" (Baumer, Messner, & Felson, 2000: 284). In line with devaluation research surrounding clearance and in contrast to focal concerns theory, older, White, male victims, and victims who are employed, have also been found to be more likely to have their crimes prosecuted (Myers & Hagan, 1979). Victim devaluation has been found to be particularly likely at the initial case screening stage (Kingsnorth et al., 1998; Pyrooz, Wolfe, & Spohn, 2011; Sorensen & Wallace, 1999). LaFree's (1980) study of victim and offender racial dyads, however, found that while victim and offender race do not impact prosecution, trial, or verdict stages, Black offenders who victimize Whites are sentenced more harshly than Black offenders who victimize Blacks. LaFree's study underlines the importance of studying multiple case processing outcomes and of including victim and offender race in studies of case processing (see also Baldus, Woodworth, & Pulaski, 1990; Bowers & Pierce, 1980; Gross & Mauro, 1984; Kingsnorth et al., 1998; Paternoster, 1984; Sorensen & Wallace, 1999; Spohn, 1994; Spohn & Spears, 1996; Walsh, 1987; Wolfgang & Riedel, 1973).

Other more recent efforts have been made to examine sentencing in the context of earlier case processing outcomes. Such studies focus on charging decisions (Kingsnorth, MacIntosh, & Sutherland, 2002; Shermer & Johnson, 2010; Wilmot & Spohn, 2004), pretrial detention/release (Demuth, 2003; Demuth & Steffensmeier, 2004; Freiburger, 2010; Shook & Goodkind, 2009; Spohn, 2009; Williams, 2003), mandatory minimums

(Bjerk, 2005; Crawford, 2000; Farrell, 2003; Ulmer et al., 2007), federal substantial assistance departure motions (Hartley, Maddan, & Spohn, 2007; Johnson et al., 2008; Spohn & Fornango, 2009; Ulmer, Light, & Kramer, 2011a, 2011b), and mode of conviction (Johnson, 2003; King, Soulé, Steen, & Weidner, 2005; Kramer & Ulmer, 2009; Ulmer & Bradley, 2006; Ulmer, Eisenstein, & Johnson, 2010). Prosecutors' early decisions appear to influence subsequent criminal justice stage outcomes in the sense that lenient treatment during initial stages is associated with less punishment later on (Hartley et al., 2007; Johnson et al., 2008), while being treated harshly during initial stages is associated with increased punishment later on (Crawford, 2000; Kramer & Ulmer, 2009; Spohn, 2009; Ulmer & Bradley, 2006; Williams, 2003; Wilmot & Spohn, 2004).[17]

Importantly, while legal, extralegal, and resource characteristics may be important on their own, they may also interact with one another to impact criminal justice actor decision-making. Substantial assistance departures have been found to be, for instance, more likely in areas with heavier caseloads, leading to more lenient sentences (Johnson et al., 2008). Racial disparities in case processing are often conditioned by other extralegal factors, such as gender and age (Spohn, 2000; Spohn & Holleran, 2000; Steffensmeier et al., 1998), and legal factors, such as offense type (Johnson & Betsinger, 2009; Mustard, 2001). Black defendants have been found to be more harshly punished in drug and

[17] Wilmot and Spohn (2004) found in their study of 348 federal defendants that the number of indictment charges filed by prosecutors increased sentence lengths and decreased downward departures. Scholars who have examined substantial assistance and other downward departure types have found that they tend to lead to more lenient punishment (Hartley et al., 2007; Johnson et al., 2008). Pretrial detention decisions also tend to affect subsequent punishment decisions (Stevenson, 2017), with pretrial detention leading to harsher punishments (Spohn, 2009; Williams, 2003). Prosecutors have been found to circumvent three strikes mandatory minimums for certain people and offenses (Bjerk, 2005; Ulmer et al., 2007), and those designated as habitual offenders have been found to be harshly punished (Crawford, 2000). Researchers have also looked at sentencing differences between guilty pleas and trials, and find that defendants who are convicted by trial receive harsher punishment than those with negotiated or open guilty pleas (Kramer & Ulmer, 2009; Ulmer & Bradley, 2006).

property cases and cases involving White victims, but these effects appear to diminish in cases involving serious, violent crime (Crawford et al.,1998).

Other studies suggest that the impacts of combinations of case, offender, and victim characteristics may be dependent on victim-defendant relationship (Kerstetter, 1990; Kingsnorth, MacIntosh, & Wentworth, 1999; Spohn & Holleran, 2001). Spohn and Spears (1996), for instance, found that victim-offender relationship is only a significant predictor of harsh punishment in cases involving Black victims and offenders. Importantly, most studies of victims and victim-defendant relationships are limited to explaining homicide, sexual assault, domestic violence, and death penalty cases (Baumer et al., 2000; Bryden & Lengnick, 1996; Holleran et al., 2010; Petersen, 2017b; Spears & Spohn, 1996, 1997; Stanko, 1982; Worrall et al., 2006).

Finally, the effects of race on case processing may vary depending on community context. Some studies find that as Black populations increase, racial disparities increase (Kramer & Ulmer, 2009; Ulmer & Johnson, 2004; Weidner, Frase, & Schultz, 2005). Others find no significant effects of racial/ethnic population composition (Kautt, 2002; Weidner & Frase, 2003) or findings in contrast to racial threat (Britt, 2000).

### 2.1.3 POLICE AND PROSECUTOR DECISION-MAKING

Studies that consider police and prosecutor decisions in tandem are vital to determining how criminal justice actors shape eligible samples of cases across various case processing stages (Kutateladze et al., 2014; Kutateladze et al., 2012; Spohn, 2000; Zatz, 1987, 2000). Police clearance and prosecutorial case screening decisions are influential, setting the stage for potential racial disparities by determining what cases are

worth solving and prosecuting, and how cases are presented to the courts (Bright, 1994; Pierce & Radelet, 2005; Songer & Unah, 2006). Further, as loosely coupled systems (Weick, 1982), criminal justice systems often lack cooperation, rely on different information systems, and hold high levels of autonomy, allowing for the powerful use of discretion (Bishop et al., 2010; Hagan, Hewitt, & Alwin, 1979; Jackson, Webster, & Hagan, 1982; Leiber & Jamieson, 1995; Reiss, 1971).

Few studies to date offer comprehensive explanations of case processing across police and prosecutor stages. Two are particularly germane to the current study. Petersen's (2017b) examination of racial disparities in police arrest and prosecutorial charging decisions for death-eligible offenses is an important contribution to the literature. The study uses data on homicides that occurred in LA County (1990-1994) to compare and contrast clearance and charging predictors. Petersen finds that non-White victims' cases are underdeveloped by police and prosecutors, leading to racial disparities that result in White victims' cases being more likely than non-White victims' cases to be charged with death-eligible offenses. The devaluation of victims of color is found to be significant at both stages, but the effects are stronger at the charging stage, suggesting that discretion may allow extralegal factors to influence the police, and perhaps to a larger degree, prosecutors. Importantly to the current study, Petersen (2017b) also finds differential effects of predictors on clearance and charging outcomes, which he interprets as a disconnect between the loosely coupled police and prosecutor institutions. Specifically, he finds that while crime location and weapon type variables are important for clearance, charging decisions are associated with offense severity. This work

demonstrates the importance of investigating the influence of a wide variety of predictors on the case processing of various types of crime.

Work by Spohn and Tellis (2019) is also useful in informing the current study. Using sexual assault data from the Los Angeles Police Department and Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, Spohn and Tellis (2019) found that police officers and prosecutors act in ways that are sometimes consistent with and sometimes distinct from judges and one another, highlighting the importance of examining decision-making across stages. Like judges, police and prosecutors appear to consider factors such as crime seriousness, victim injury, offender blameworthiness and dangerousness, and practical costs of their decisions, but unlike judges, they appear to be more concerned with likelihood of conviction than incarceration costs. According to Spohn and Tellis (2019), police officers are likely to base arrest decisions on the likelihood that prosecutors will accept a case and convict after an arrest is made. Prosecutors are likely to base charge decisions on similar concerns, and in particular the likelihood of cases being "strong" and "winnable" (Frohmann, 1991, 1997). Arrest and charging also appears to be based on victim-offender relationships and victim credibility, with cases involving stranger victim-offender relationships and highly credible victims being more likely than other case types to involve police arrest and prosecutorial case acceptance.

Spohn and Tellis (2019) show that the ways in which police and prosecutor actions are measured significantly influences study sample sizes as well as the impact of predictors on various outcomes. The researchers measured decisions to arrest in two ways: clearance by arrest and suspect was arrested, the latter of which captures cases in which an arrest was made but the district attorney did not formally file charges. In

addition, the researchers measured whether a detective presented the case to the district attorney for pre-arrest charge evaluation, and they measured charging in two ways to capture cases that specifically resulted in suspect arrest as well as cases that were, regardless of arrest status, presented to the district attorney for evaluation. A significant proportion of cases in New York were found to be exceptionally cleared, indicating that the district attorney refused to file charges and that studies that look simply at arrest clearance may be missing important data. Further, cases that were reviewed before a suspect was arrested tended to be rejected by prosecutors, demonstrating the importance of distinguishing between cases that are formally cleared by arrest and ones that are evaluated by prosecutors prior to arrest. This study sheds light on the importance of clearly distinguishing between clearance by arrest and exceptional clearance (e.g., cases that may have involved prosecutor evaluations), as well as cases that involved official clearance and prosecutorial refusal versus charging.[18]

In examining what predictors impact arrest and charging decisions, Spohn and Tellis (2019) found that while official clearance by arrest was affected by crime seriousness, evidentiary strength, and victim characteristics, broader decisions to arrest were only impacted by crime seriousness and evidentiary strength. Evidence was found for the notion that detectives screen cases with prosecutors (though pre-arrest charge evaluation) when cases lack sufficient evidence and victims' behaviors are questionable, underscoring the importance of qualitative research. In examining charging, Spohn and Tellis (2019) found that victim age, victim motive to lie, and victim cooperation were

[18] A small sample of cases in the current sample were not denoted as cleared by the police, but did make it to the prosecutor's office for evaluation. Case records from these complaints should be examined in depth to determine how these cases were treated by the police and prosecutors.

associated with charging decisions following arrest. When charging was measured more broadly, however, risky victim behavior, serious charge type, suspect weapon use, and time taken for a victim to report a crime influenced charging in addition to the factors listed above. The researchers ultimately "argue that decisions made by police and prosecutors should not be examined in isolation from one another and that researchers who analyze arrest decisions by examining only cases that are formally cleared by arrest or who focus only on charging decisions that follow the arrest of a suspect may be ignoring important aspects of police and prosecutorial decision-making" (Spohn & Tellis, 2019:1). While the current study is unable to address each of these important concerns, it does build on these studies in a number of ways, bringing us closer to an understanding of police and prosecutor behaviors.

## 2.2 CHALLENGES FOR THE LITERATURE

### 2.2.1 POLICE CLEARANCE RESEARCH

Research examining crime clearance has been limited in a number of respects. First, variables pertaining to witness involvement, police resources/workloads, and neighborhoods are largely absent from studies, most likely because such data are difficult to access (Wellford et al., 2019). Second, few studies have considered the moderating influence of devaluation indicators, such as victim race, and solvability factors, such as victim-suspect relationship, on clearance. Exploring interaction effects is an important step in disentangling devaluation and solvability, and their relative influences on clearance. In addition, studies have yet to disentangle variables definitionally and in analyses, with certain indicators being used as proxies for both devaluation and

solvability (Rydberg & Pizarro, 2014). In their study of homicide clearance, Puckett and Lundman (2003) use neighborhood racial composition as a proxy for trust in the police and willingness to assist detectives, and suggest that racial composition is associated with lower clearance because of poor police relations and lack of witness involvement. The relationship between the police and the community is, however, only one interpretation of what racial composition is measuring. Finally, few studies have considered the clearance of crimes other than homicide (Taylor et al., 2009). Since police departments are pressured to clear homicides, they may be less impacted by extralegal factors, such as victim and neighborhood race. Therefore, one remaining question concerns whether factors related to clearance are crime type-dependent.

### 2.2.2 PROSECUTORIAL CASE SCREENING AND COURT CASE PROCESSING RESEARCH

Research examining decision-making among prosecutors and judges does an exceptional job of including defendant, legal, and resource characteristics in their studies, of studying a range of crime types, and of studying various case processing stages. While recent studies of prosecutor decision-making and sentencing have incorporated measures of neighborhood context and victim characteristics (see Table 2), victim and neighborhood characteristics have historically tended to be absent from the research examining prosecutorial decision-making. Further, though largely compatible with one another, the multitude of theories and predictor variables surrounding case processing makes it difficult to synthesize findings in meaningful, organized ways. As is the case in clearance research, few studies have considered important relationships between

indicators, which is necessary if we are to weigh alternative perspectives and the influence of extralegal, legal, and resource factors on various case processing stages (Kurlychek & Johnson, 2019; Spohn, 2000). Finally, studies have yet to disentangle variables definitionally and in analyses, with certain indicators being used as proxies for extralegal, legal, and resource variables (Rydberg & Pizarro, 2014). For instance, in prosecutorial decision-making studies, victim-offender relationship has been conceptualized as an extralegal variable in some studies and a legal variable in others.

In his discussion of sentencing research, Ulmer (2012: 8-9) said that there are no "truly competing, mutually exclusive theories…Rather, we seem to have a number of complementary theoretical concepts, hypotheses, and models, some of which have evolved through processes of mutual influence and cross-fertilization." I agree and posit that Ulmer's statement can be broadened to explain case processing more generally.

In order to provide a comprehensive view of case processing, a conceptualization is needed that is compatible across police and prosecutor decision-making stages. In addition to synthesizing devaluation and solvability characteristics from the clearance literature with extralegal, legal, and resource characteristics found in research examining prosecutors and the courts, a revised conceptualization should attend to conceptualization and modeling issues surrounding police and prosecutor decision-making. Devaluation and extralegal components are theoretically and conceptually intertwined with solvability, legal, and resource variables, but studies have yet to disentangle variables definitionally and in analyses (Rydberg & Pizarro, 2014). For example, whereas prosecutorial decision-making studies view racial composition through the lens of racial threat or focal concerns perspectives, clearance studies use racial composition as proxies

for devaluation *or* solvability. Whereas in prosecutorial decision-making studies, victim-offender relationship is sometimes considered an extralegal variable, in clearance work, it is viewed as a variable that affects the solvability of a case.

Furthermore, variables associated with incidents (e.g., weapon type), neighborhoods (e.g., crime levels), police districts/prosecutor offices (e.g., case workloads), and police and prosecutor information gathering (e.g., witnesses and evidence) have been used interchangeably as proxies for solvability, legal, and resource variables, with little acknowledgment of their different meanings, levels of analysis, and relations to case processing. Thus, when operationalizing variables, researchers within and across subdisciplines use devaluation and extralegal concepts as measures of solvability, legal, and resource factors, producing confusion. It is vital that researchers begin to attend to these concerns by synthesizing traditional concepts in clear ways and recognizing that particular variables might be measuring multiple concepts at once.

### 2.2.3 TOWARD A SYNTHESIZED FRAMEWORK OF CASE PROCESSING

Baumer (2013: 240) called on "the next generation of scholars..[to] delve… deeper into the various ways that 'race'" might shape justice system treatment, "especially across multiple stages of the criminal justice process." In addition to considering the diverse ways in which race might affect police and prosecutor decision-making, the current study frames case processing outcomes within a cumulative disadvantage framework that is able to examine whether racial disparities operate within and/or across case processing stages.

## 2.3 SUMMARY

If we are to comprehensively understand victim and suspect treatment, and complex processes of racial inequality, the criminal justice system must be viewed as a multi-staged process that includes – but certainly is not limited to – the punishment of suspects. My general argument is that while harsh punishment may be considered disadvantageous to Black suspects, neglect in formal case processing (i.e., case dismissal, rather than clearance and prosecution) may be considered disadvantageous to Black victims. We can think of these processes as a "dual disadvantage" in which people of color are harmed as both victims and perpetrators of violence.

Studies must attend to limitations in case processing literatures, and can begin to do so by clearly operationalizing and distinguishing between constructs. Measuring the respective contributions of theoretical predictors on case processing also requires an approach that attends to victims and disparities across stages. As Hawley (1950: 209) noted, "[s]implification is indeed an objective as well as a procedure in scientific work, but it should not be achieved at the expense of completeness." Indeed, unless all relevant indicators and processes are included in a framework, it is difficult to assess the origins of any disparities.

# CHAPTER 3

# TOWARD A "DUAL DISADVANTAGE" FRAMEWORK

This chapter has three goals. First, it contextualizes the "dual disadvantage" framework by describing recent crime control changes that may have disproportionately affected people of color as victims and perpetrators of violence. It then presents a synthesized framework containing interrelated, but conceptually distinct processes that can be used to explain racial disparities in case processing across criminal justice stages. The final section of the chapter discusses the dissertation's hypotheses.

## 3.1 CRIME CONTROL IN MODERN SOCIETY

During colonial America, individuals who were victims of crime were largely responsible for pursuing justice against their perpetrators, and restitution was favored over incarceration (Davis, Kunreuther, & Connick, 1984; McDonald, 1976). The deterrence doctrine was first introduced into the lexicon of social sciences in 1764 (Beccaria, 1764). It helped guide American criminal justice policies post-American independence, replacing private vengeance practices (Ayers, 1984). Reformers prioritized reformation and correction during the first decades of the nineteenth century, and between the Civil War and early twentieth century, retribution found itself back into crime control policy (Ayers, 1984). Beginning in the 1940s and lasting until the 1970s, criminal justice reforms were based on ideals of rehabilitation, correction, and reform (Allen, 1981; Rubin, 2014). Incapacitation and deterrence-based punishment became dominant criminal justice policies during the 1970s (Rubin, 2014). This most recent

transformation of punishment has been termed the penal order (Campbell & Schoenfeld, 2013), the new penology (Feeley & Simon, 1992), a culture of control (Garland, 2001), hyperincarceration (Wacquant, 2010), and mass incarceration (Alexander, 2010) among other phrases.

The bureaucratization of crime control issues across local, state, and federal levels, which began during the 1700s, largely accelerated during the 1900s (Friedman, 1994; Gottschalk, 2006; Henderson, 1985; Miller, 2008; Murakawa, 2005; Stuntz, 2008; Zimring & Hawkins, 1997). During this time, unique changes in the criminal justice realm occurred as America increasingly relied on punishment and deterrence, criminal procedures were expanded at the state and federal levels, and local-level criminal justice actors were provided increased control over criminal justice (Calavita & Jenness, 2015; Davis et al., 1984; Stuntz, 2008). Such changes had political, legal, economic, and social consequences. Among them appear to be the loosening of already loosely coupled bureaucracies (Glassman, 1973), and the simultaneous over-punishment and under-protection of Black community residents (Leovy, 2015; Miller, 2015; Soss & Weaver, 2017).[19]

Specifically, during the latter half of the twentieth century, criminalization and punishment enhancement techniques occurred within and across local, state, and federal jurisdictions, when President Richard Nixon declared that illegal drugs were to be made "public enemy number one" and called for a war that would simultaneously combat drug

[19] Scholars have largely focused on the over-punishment of people of color (Cole, 1998, 1999; Chesney-Lind & Mauer, 2003). Though the notion of under-protection has been around for decades (e.g., Ayers, 1984; Litwack, 1980; Powdermaker, 1939; Rohrlich & Tulsky, 1996a, 1996b), only recently have scholars attended to the paradox of Black over-punishment and under-protection (Forman, 2012; Miller, 2013; Natapoff, 2006; Stuntz, 2006).

use and support a conservative revolution (Alexander, 2010; Wacquant, 2013). Nixon focused his agenda on controlling increased national crime rates that were perceived as being committed by lower-class Black men (Beckett, 1997; Edsal & Edsal, 1991). In 1982, Ronald Reagan's administration used its powers to further the War on Drugs, producing powerful social control of particular populations (Beckett, 1997; Beckett & Western, 2001; Edsal & Edsal, 1991; Feeley, 2003; Jacobs & Carmichael, 2001). Voters' increasing fear of crime, boosted funding of federal law enforcement agencies such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), and the expansion of police and prosecution agencies caused people of color in inner-cities to be disproportionately punished for various crimes (Garland, 2001; Walker, 1998; Wacquant, 2011).

Criminal justice research came to center around criminalization, sentence enhancements, and incarceration trends and the ways in which such trends have been highly racialized and have ultimately perpetuated disadvantage (Tonry, 1995; National Research Council, 2014; Wilson, 1987). According to Western (2006), get-tough crime approaches ultimately led to the mass incarceration of Black males and the systematic degradation of family functioning, lowering of educational attainment, and worsening of economic conditions for disadvantaged communities.[20]

While criminal justice agencies have been expanding the processing and punishment of Black people who have perpetrated crime, complex processes may be at work that also promote victim neglect. During the 1970s, enhanced criminal justice

[20] The disproportionate incarceration of Black males appears to have also been affected by the different age structures of Whites and Blacks (Vogel & Porter, 2016), as well as race differences in arrest for certain crimes (i.e., murder and rape), but not others (i.e., drug trafficking, drug possession, weapons, and aggravated assault) (Beck & Blumstein, 2018).

system punishments and governmental interests in more effective crime control strategies were met with calls for legislative and practical reforms designed to increase victim participation in the criminal justice system process (Herman, 2010; Strang & Sherman, 2003). Criminal justice agencies, jurisdictions, and states throughout the country implemented a number of changes granting victims rights and services, though it is unclear whether victims' informal or formal roles in case processing actually improved (Davis et al., 1984; Herman, 2010).[21] In fact, victims – and victims of color in particular – seemed to be increasingly neglected at various stages of case processing, as crime and caseloads increased at unprecedented rates (Davis et al., 1984; Garland, 1996; Herman, 2010; Miller, 2013; Taylor et al., 2009).

Specifically, criminal justice institutions appear to have been forced into "defining deviance down," a process that allows offenses to be discarded (Garland, 1996; Lipsky, 2010). Not only does the "defining down" strategy entail that arrests and prosecutions will be diverted, but it also involves criminal justice actors focusing their time and resources on only those crimes that might be effectively investigated. In line with focal concerns theory, "certain offences which have a low likelihood of detection and a low priority for the public" may be disregarded in an attempt "to conserve resources for those crimes which can be targeted and investigated effectively" (Garland, 1996: 456). Such practices might have led to the neglect of offenses that are difficult to solve, and the prioritization of crimes that are easier to clear and prosecute (Frohmann, 1997; Holleran et al., 2010; Leovy, 2015; Miller, 2015; Stuntz, 2008). In his examination of criminal justice system changes over time, sociologist David Garland (1996: 457)

[21] This is important because "[i]f rights are created but not honored or enforced, they become meaningless" (Fattah, 1986; Herman, 2010: 67).

emphasized the neglect of "minor offence behaviour." In line with recent research showing declines in various types of enforcement activities – including both misdemeanors and felonies – in predominately Black areas of St. Louis, the current dissertation take Garland's (1996) assertion a step further and hypothesizes that, in addition to neglecting minor crimes, our criminal justice systems may disregard *serious* crimes committed against Black victims and in Black communities. This is important because firearm crimes committed in Black communities tend to be the most difficult to clear (Petersen, 2017a; Vaughn, 2020). It is problematic because poor criminal justice system responses likely lower victims' and community members' likelihoods of invoking the criminal justice system and cooperating during investigations, perpetuating cycles of neglect (Baumer, 2002; Clampet-Lundquist, Carr, & Kefalas, 2015; Gau & Brunson, 2010; Hipple, Thompson, Huebner, & Magee, 2019; Kaiser, O'Neal, & Spohn, 2017; Leovy, 2015; O'Neal, 2017; Roth, 2009). Not only do predominately Black communities see "too little of the kinds of policing and criminal punishment that do the most good" (Stuntz, 2011: 5), they may have come to view "themselves as essentially stateless - unprotected by the law and its enforcers and marginal to the project of making American society" (Bell, 2017: 2057).[22]

Thus, the criminal justice system appears to have been "experiencing a situation rather more complex than 'net-widening'—one in which the state agencies of criminal justice have been steadily increasing in size, in 'productivity', and in the numbers of cases processed, at the same time as they have been reducing the extent to which they

[22] Soss and Weaver (2017) describe the racial and economic exclusion and predation experienced by race-class subjugated communities, and Bell (2017) builds on this work, arguing that such communities simultaneously experience abuse by and alienation from the police while also being disproportionately affected by violence and disorder, leading to legal estrangement.

process and penalize" (Garland, 1996: 457). In today's society, Black individuals may be simultaneously over-punished and neglected by criminal justice systems at various levels of case processing (Miller, 2013; Taylor et al., 2009).

It is important to note that, while majorities of Black Americans have and, in some cases, continue to support criminal justice interventions that aim to control crime, such calls have been coupled with calls for job, education, and housing reforms to combat poverty, segregation, and other social conditions that have been substantiated as root causes of crime (Forman, 2017).[23] Attention to non-criminal justice related reforms have, however, remained low-priority for politicians who have come to view the criminal justice system as a voter-approved solution to crime. As local, state, and federal criminal justice systems began expanding at unprecedented rates during the latter part of the 1900s, Black communities were increasingly neglected by other forms of welfare and public social services (Garland, 2001), and forced to view criminal justice reforms, such as gun control legislation, as small but insufficient wins (Forman, 2017). As time went on, "[w]hen an urgent problem required a short-term solution, law enforcement was regarded as the only answer" (Forman, 2017: 148).

The current study is interested in determining whether, in fact, promises of law enforcement and prosecution have come to protect Black victims and communities through formal criminal case processing. Research examining victims has identified key

[23] One 1984 survey by *Ebony* magazine found, for instance, that Black Americans thought the government should increase spending on job training, education, and antidiscrimination law enforcement (Clark & Clark Harris, 1985). In 1992, the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies found that while 95 percent of Black Americans favored more spending on job training, education, and child care for low-income persons, 73 percent favored mandatory minimums for selling "any amount of drugs." A recent survey conducted by Peyton, Vaughn, and Huber (2020) also found support for the argument that Black Americans support more funding for law enforcement and various other public services, although Black individuals were more likely than non-Blacks to support significant police reform.

services that are important to victims (Herman, 2010). Less is known about the extent to which victims are afforded access to such services, and about victims' experiences with particular criminal justice actors, such as police and prosecutors.

Recent research suggests that criminal justice agents may fail to provide victims with the services and energy required to promote satisfaction, regardless of victim race. The National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) offers the most in-depth data about victimization experiences.[24] Each year, data about personal and household victimization are collected from a nationally representative sample consisting of approximately 90,000 households and 158,000 respondents aged 12 and older (Truman & Langton, 2015). The most recent NCVS report showed that approximately 11 percent of violent victimizations received assistance from victim service agencies during 2018 (Morgan & Oudekerk, 2019). We also learned from the survey that the rates of violent victimization and violent victimizations *not* reported to police both increased between 2015 and 2018 (Morgan & Oudekerk, 2019).

In interviews with a nationally representative sample of over 800 crime victims, the 2016 National Survey of Victims' Views (NSVV) addressed victims' experiences with the police and prosecutors, and the effectiveness of the criminal justice system in meeting victims' needs. According to the survey's findings, one in four victims reported receiving assistance from the police, and only one in 10 received assistance from a prosecutor's office. While it is unclear how many of these victims' crimes came to the

[24] The survey was developed by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) during the 1960s in an attempt to more accurately measure the rates of reported and unreported personal and household victimization each year. Its comprehensiveness, high response rates, and rotating panel design make it a unique and effective measure of criminal victimization in the United States (Planty, Langton, & Barnett-Ryan, 2014). The NCVS complements the Uniform Crime Report (UCR) and is used by social scientists and law enforcement agencies to investigate issues ranging from reporting to the police to the relationships between victims and offenders.

attention of the criminal justice system, the study reports that "the number one and two reasons for not reporting cited by respondents, respectively, were feeling that the police wouldn't do anything and prosecution and courts wouldn't do anything" (Alliance for Safety and Justice, 2019: 11).

In sum, failure to address root causes of crime, coupled with inequitable criminal justice response, has likely led to "the worst of all possible worlds" in which police and other criminal justice actors are simultaneously indifferent to suffering and overly punitive to Black citizens in poor communities (Forman, 2017: 77).[25] The simultaneous over-punishment and under-protection of Black individuals and communities is one of the most important and yet frequently overlooked patterns in criminal justice (Leovy, 2015; Miller, 2015; Rios, 2011). I argue that we can think of these processes as a "dual disadvantage" in which Black victims and suspects suffer more harm than White victims and suspects.

## 3.2 FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

Scholars suggest that, by focusing solely on the consequences of criminal justice system involvement for offenders, we have overlooked important issues regarding how

[25] One common misperception that is touted by right-leaning political actors in today's society is that while Black people are quick to condemn police violence against Black Americans, they disregard street violence (e.g., Forman, 2017; Miller, 2016). It is important to note that, while Black experiences and attitudes about the criminal justice system are incredibly complex, Black citizens have never condoned violence. As Forman (2017: 11) points out, "African Americans have *always* viewed the protection of black lives as a civil rights issue, whether the threat comes from police officers or street criminals. Far from ignoring the issue of crime by blacks against other blacks, African American officials and their constituents have been consumed by it." He cites Black columnist Carl Rowan's journalistic account, which stated "The poor and the uninformed are easy to prey upon, and the courts don't give a damn about the victims… [They] let the perpetrators of unconscionable violence go free to terrorize minority communities again and again." (cited by Forman, 2017: 129). This finding has also been demonstrated in research. For example, the Kerner Commission (1968) found that many Black Americans perceived the police as tolerating street violence in poor Black communities but not others.

victims are treated by the justice system (e.g., Herman, 2010; Miller, 2013). This dissertation calls for a revised framework of justice and fairness that centers around victims and attends to what both suspects and victims might view as disadvantage (i.e., "dual disadvantage"). While it is may be that the criminal justice system harshly penalizes Black suspects' offenses while disregarding Black victims in various ways (Leovy, 2015; Miller, 2015), mechanisms underlying these processes remain unclear. This dissertation aims to unpack such mechanisms of "dual disadvantage."

In this section, I present a working framework that captures the theoretical factors that have been proposed to impact clearance and prosecution (see Table 3), and specific hypotheses to be empirically tested in the dissertation. The framework breaks traditional characteristics into clear categories, operationalizes understudied concepts, and attends to the overlapping nature of variables in describing theoretical concepts. Although specific indicators transcend concepts in the framework, theoretical concepts themselves are distinct and fit with one and only one category. By incorporating and controlling for many relevant hypotheses and different outcomes, and by situating case processing in the context of victim and defendant disadvantage, the dissertation can discern the theoretical mechanisms that are affecting case processing and the criminal justice system more generally.

Though the framework presented below can be used to explain a wide range of criminal justice system outcomes, the dissertation focuses on associations between race and outcomes pertaining to initial police and prosecutorial case processing stages. Thus, the discussion of the framework centers around victim and suspect race, and suggests that the effects of race may be moderated by case-level characteristics.

### 3.2.1 SYNTHESIZING DEVALUATION AND EXTRALEGAL FACTORS

The revised framework separates traditional devaluation and extralegal concepts into three categories: person, case, and group devaluation. Traditional victim and group devaluation perspectives from clearance research and extralegal perspectives discussed by prosecutor and court researchers are synthesized to include person and group devaluation indicators. According to person and group devaluation, Black individuals (i.e., person devaluation) and neighborhoods (i.e., group devaluation) will be both neglected and harshly punished by criminal justice system actors, depending on the type of person (e.g., victim, suspect) and criminal justice outcome in question (Black, 1976; Caravelis et al., 2011; Crawford et al., 1998; Jarvis & Regoeczi, 2009; Petersen, 2017a; Piehl & Bushway, 2007; Schlesinger, 2013; Steffensmeier et al, 1998; Ulmer et al., 2007). Though race is the main indicator in this study, person devaluation can also include indicators such as sex, age, and marital status.

Case devaluation is in line with Garland's (1996) "defining down" strategy and the argument that certain types of cases will receive disproportionately harsh attention or neglect from criminal justice actors, depending on the case and outcome in question. Case devaluation can be affected by factors such as crime type, incident motive, and whether a defendant was detained pretrial. Importantly, the actions taken by criminal justice actors throughout case processing, such as decisions to grant bail or to use mandatory minimum sentencing guidelines, might impact case devaluation at later decision-making stages.

Group devaluation includes racial composition, concentrated disadvantage, residential instability, and "association devaluation." Association devaluation is added to

## Table 3. Conceptualizing Case Processing

| Concept | Examples of relevant constructs and hypotheses | Level of analysis |
|---|---|---|
| Person devaluation | **Clearance:** Victim race, credibility/deservedness; Suspect race, prior criminal history; victim-suspect dyads; witness credibility; **victim-suspect relationship**<br>**Screening:** Victim race, credibility/deservedness; suspect race; prior criminal history; victim-suspect racial dyads; witness credibility; **victim-suspect relationship**<br>**Hypothesis**: Crimes involving non-Black victims are more likely to be cleared/prosecuted than ones involving Black victims. | Person; Case |
| Case devaluation | **Clearance**: **Crime type/severity**; **incident motive**<br>**Screening**: **Crime type/severity**; **incident motive**<br>**Hypothesis**: Homicides will be cleared and prosecuted at higher rates than other crime types. | Case |
| Group devaluation | **Clearance**: Racial composition; neighborhood crime rate<br>**Screening**: Racial composition; crime rate<br>**Hypothesis**: Crimes that occur in communities with high percentages of Black residents will have lower clearance/prosecution levels than those that occur in communities characterized by small Black populations. Crimes that occur in high-crime communities will have lower clearance/prosecution levels than those that occur in low-crime communities. | Community |
| Case solvability | **Clearance**: Weapon type; **victim-suspect relationship**; **incident motive**; **crime type/severity**<br>**Screening:** Weapon type; **victim-suspect relationship**; **incident motive**; **crime type/severity**<br>**Hypotheses**: Firearm crimes will be less likely to be cleared/prosecuted compared to those committed with personal weapons or knives because they lack evidence. | Case |
| Justice system action | **Clearance**: Witness information; forensic evidence; police policy; investigative effort<br>**Screening**: Witness information; police evidence; prosecutor policy; prosecutorial effort<br>**Hypothesis**: Crimes involving witness information are expected to have higher clearance/prosecution likelihoods than those that do not involve witnesses. | Case |
| Workload/resources | **Clearance**: Detective workload; district crime rate<br>**Screening**: Prosecutor workload; court case rate<br>**Hypotheses**: Police districts that experience high detective workloads are expected to have lower clearance. Prosecutors that have high case workloads are expected to have lower case acceptance rates. | Criminal justice actor; police district; prosecutor office; court |

**NOTE**: Bolded predictors are those that may act as proxies for multiple concepts.

the framework to capture the community-level focal concerns approach and to examine whether police officers' and prosecutors' judgements about communities – and the people who make them up – affect treatment within the criminal justice system (Klinger, 1997). Association devaluation is based on the idea that in higher crime neighborhoods, the police "encounter more situations in which the line between victim and offender is blurred" and "believe that larger segments of the population are undeserving" (Klinger, 1997: 291). In the present conceptualization, Klinger's work is taken a step further. Specifically, crimes that take place in high-crime areas are expected to be perceived by police *and* prosecutors as deserving of lesser effort, while crimes in low-crime areas are expected to be treated punitively when punished. Association devaluation can therefore also be used to explain criminal justice actors' "perceptual shorthands" in dealing with crimes committed in high-crime areas.

Although a number of devaluation factors will be examined in this study, the main focus will be on victim and suspect devaluation, particularly in the context of race. The dissertation explores one overarching descriptive research question and its two subcomponents.

*Do Black individuals systematically receive less favorable outcomes at individual punishment stages?*

*A. Do Black victims systematically receive less favorable outcomes at individual case processing stages (i.e., clearance, case screening)?*

*B. Do Black suspects systematically receive less favorable outcomes at individual case processing stages (i.e., clearance, case screening)?*

While Black victims are expected to be neglected by the state, cases involving Black suspects are expected to be disproportionately attended to, leading to a "dual disadvantage." Significant racial disparities are expected to be found in bivariate and multivariate analyses, as well as in interactions with other variables.

A large body of scholarship demonstrates that Black victims are more likely than non-Black victims to mobilize the law when victimized (Avakame, Fyfe, & McCoy, 1999; Bachman, 1998; Baumer & Lauritsen, 2010; Felson, Messner, & Hoskin, 1999; Felson, Messner, Hoskin, & Deane, 2002; Fisher, Daigle, Cullen, & Turner, 2003; Hart & Rennison, 2003; Xie & Lauritsen, 2012), and other research suggests that victims prefer to see their cases being handled seriously by criminal justice system actors during various criminal justice stages (Herman, 2010; Miller, 2015; Natapoff, 2009; Strang & Sherman, 2003).[26] In line with the idea of Black victim disadvantage, *cases involving Black victims are hypothesized to be less likely than cases involving White victims to be cleared (Hypothesis 1A) and accepted for prosecution (Hypothesis 1B).*[27] These hypotheses are expected to hold across models and when controlling for theoretically relevant predictors.

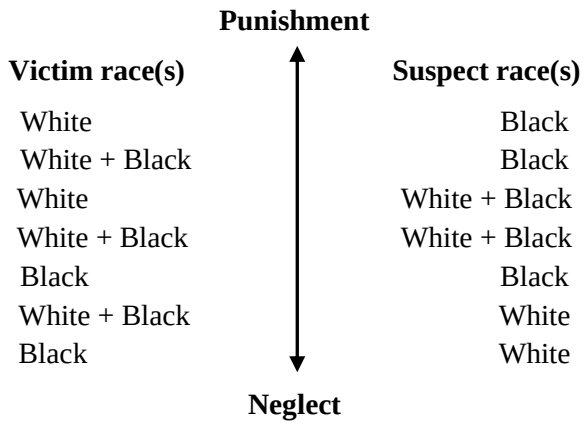
Just as neglect can be considered disadvantageous to Black victims, punishment can be considered disadvantageous to Black suspects, who appear to be more harshly punished than their non-Black counterparts (Kutateladze et al., 2014; Piehl & Bushway, 2007; Schlesinger, 2013), even in cases involving non-White victims (Hawkins, 1987; LaFree, 1980; Paternoster, 1984; Spohn & Spears, 1996; Walsh, 1987). Suspect over-punishment – and "dual disadvantage" – is also hypothesized to operate at clearance and

[26] There is, however, recent evidence from St. Louis, MO suggesting that non-White victims might not report crimes or cooperate with criminal justice systems, even when seriously injured (Hipple et al., 2019).
[27] This is in line with a recent finding that cases involving Black individuals are more likely to "benefit from case dismissals" (Kutateladze et al., 2014: 514).

initial case screening. In line with the research, *regardless of victim race, cases involving Black suspects are hypothesized to be more likely than cases that do not involve Black suspects to be attended to (Hypothesis 2).* Specifically, *Black suspects' cases will be more likely than others to be (2A) cleared and (2B) accepted for prosecution* across models.

One unique aspect of the dissertation is its examination of victim-suspect racial dyads. Donald Black's behavior of law theory (1976) expects cases involving Black suspects and White victims to be most likely to be cleared and prosecuted, followed by cases involving White suspects and victims and cases involving Black suspects and victims. Cases involving White suspects and Black victims, according to the theory, will be least likely to be prioritized, as White suspects are provided impunity and Black victims do not enjoy legal protection. The dissertation examines whether this is the case (*Hypothesis 3*). While Black (1976) does not specify outcomes for cases involving multiple victims and/or suspects of different races, I hypothesize that cases involving any White victims and Black suspects will be taken more seriously than ones involving only Black victims and suspects, and cases involving Black and White victims will be taken less seriously than ones involving Black victims and suspects in cases involving White suspects. Figure 1 demonstrates *Hypothesis 3* using a continuum that distinguishes between cases that are most likely (top) and least likely (bottom) to be prioritized for punishment. The analysis of all victim-suspect racial dyad combinations is viewed as important in ascertaining the complexities that may come from examining racial disparities.

*Figure 1. Hypothesis 3*




In sum, Black suspects and victims are expected to experience outcome-specific disadvantages across police (i.e., clearance) and (i.e., initial screening) outcomes. During initial stages of case processing, Black victims' cases are expected to be removed from the criminal justice system altogether, and Black suspects' cases are hypothesized to be prioritized for punishment. Together, these actions are viewed as negatively impacting Black individuals as victims and suspects, resulting in a sort of "dual disadvantage."

Victim and suspect race will be used to test a number of theoretically-driven hypotheses relating to various case processing outcomes, and other indicators will be considered in moderation analyses (discussed below).

### 3.2.2 SYNTHESIZING SOLVABILITY, LEGAL, AND RESOURCE FACTORS

The traditional solvability, legal, and resource perspectives assessed by clearance and case screening researchers can be broken up to include three propositions: (a) the case solvability thesis, which claims that crimes involving particular characteristics of incidents, such as weapon type, determine the likelihood of case processing outcomes (Albonetti, 1987; Battelle Memorial Institute Law and Justice Center, 1977; Gottfredson & Hindelang, 1979; Roberts, 2007; Vera Institute of Justice, 1981); (b) the justice system

action thesis, which suggests that information and acts affected, collected, controlled, and/or used by the police and prosecutors (e.g., collection of witness information) affect case processing; and (c) the workload/resources thesis, which claims that detectives' and prosecutors' work and resource levels impact case processing (Borg & Parker, 2001; Klinger, 1997; LaFree, Baumer, & O'Brien, 2010; Liska et al., 1985; Mouzos & Muller, 2001; Ousey & Lee, 2010; Steffensmeier et al., 1998).

Case solvability characteristics are viewed in the conceptualization as distinct from justice system action indicators, and they include characteristics of crime incidents that should not be influenced by agents of the criminal legal system. While an incident's location, day of occurrence, and weapon type can fit into this category, in the dissertation, case solvability is considered to be important in affecting the relationship between race and criminal justice outcomes (see below). Importantly, the framework recognizes that some case solvability factors, such as victim-offender relationship, crime type, and incident motive, have the potential to be influenced by criminal justice actors. Thus, the significance of particular indicators can suggest devaluation and/or case solvability.

In prior research, solvability, legal, and resource factors contained overlapping conceptualizations that were not exclusive from one another. Though the indicators used to measure these concepts remain intertwined, justice system actions are viewed as being conceptually distinct from case solvability, neighborhoods, and police and prosecutor organizations. In line with Wellford and Cronin's (1999) notion that police practices and procedures should be distinguished from case characteristics over which the police lack control, justice system actions refer to information affected, collected, controlled, and

used by the police and prosecutors to investigate and prosecute crimes. Justice system action characteristics can include, for instance, witness information and/or evidence.

Detective and prosecutor workload and resource amounts have been hypothesized to affect punishment (Wellford & Cronin, 1999). Crimes involving Black victims may be more likely to occur in places where detectives struggle with high caseloads (Borg & Parker, 2001; LaFree et al., 2010), and this may explain in part why Black victims' cases have lower odds of clearance and prosecution. Prosecutors with high numbers of cases might refuse cases in order to avoid creating larger case backlogs, or they might neglect victims in other ways (Dixon, 1995; Engen & Steen, 2000; Steffensmeier et al., 1998). A limitation of the current dissertation is its inability to discern which prosecutors screened which cases, but police resource and workload factors are included in the framework and in analyses to accurately control for factors that are theoretically expected to impact case processing.

Traditional studies of clearance have used crime or homicide rates (Borg & Parker, 2001; Litwin, 2004; Litwin & Xu, 2007) or patrol officer workloads (Paré, Felson, & Ouimet, 2007; Petersen, 2017a) as measures of police workload, or they have looked at the impact of individual officers' training and skills on clearance (Keel et al., 2009). Studies of prosecutors have also measured resource amounts and workloads in various ways. They consider, for instance, the number of restrictive placement options available to prosecutors, which considers at a macro-level the number of different forms of incapacitative sanctions (e.g., jail, prison, intensive supervision) available to prosecutors in a jurisdiction (Rainville, 2001). Though a number of factors might be used as indicators of workload and/or resources, perhaps the most theoretically appropriate and

distinct measures of workload/resources pertaining to case processing are detective workload, crime rates, prosecutor workloads, and court case amounts. Because detectives are typically assigned to solve serious violent incidents, detective workload is viewed as a meaningful and theoretically appropriate variable in the relationship between case workload and clearance (Klinger, 1997; Puckett & Lundman, 2003). Higher detective workloads and police district crime rates are expected to lower the ability of detectives to spend the time, effort, and resources needed to clear violent crimes. Similarly, higher prosecutor workloads and court case rates are expected to lower the ability of prosecutors to spend the time, effort, and resources needed to prosecute crimes (Dixon, 1995; Engen & Steen, 2000; Steffensmeier et al., 1998).

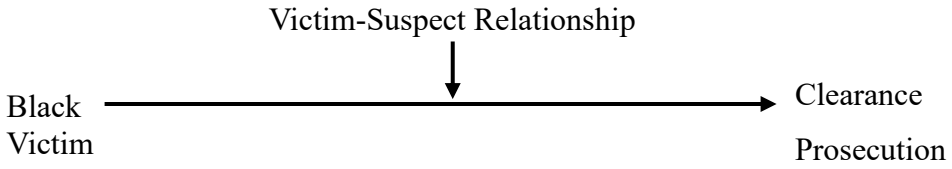
One of the strengths of organizing predictors of punishment into a cohesive and comprehensive framework is that it allows for the examination of interactions. In addition to expecting main effects for victim and suspect race, various theoretical concepts considered in the framework are expected to moderate the relationship between race and case processing outcomes. In the current dissertation, two of these relationships will be explored. Specifically, I hypothesize that *case solvability and devaluation variables will moderate the effects of race on outcome-specific disadvantages.*

Although research demonstrates that people of color are *more* likely to request assistance from the criminal justice system when they are needed (Avakame et al., 1999; Bachman, 1998; Baumer & Lauritsen, 2010; Felson et al., 1999; Felson et al., 2002; Fisher et al., 2003; Hart & Rennison, 2003; Xie & Lauritsen, 2012), recent journalistic investigations claim that Black violent crime victims and witnesses are afraid to speak out against perpetrators, and that this lack of information sharing and cooperation can

make clearance and prosecution particularly difficult (Leovy 2015; Lowery, Kelly, Mellnik, & Rich, 2018; Ryley, Singer-Vine, & Campbell, 2019). These relationships make theoretical sense, as social scientists have argued that Black community residents may be more reluctant to activate the criminal justice system and assist the police and prosecutors in investigations when they distrust the criminal justice system or have fears of retaliation (Clampet-Lundquist et al., 2015; Gau & Brunson, 2010; Hipple et al., 2019; Kaiser et al., 2017; Natapoff, 2009; O'Neal, 2017; Rios, 2011; Roth, 2009).[28] The development of a "stop snitching" campaign, decreased witness cooperation, and increasing retaliatory violence have likely worsened relations between criminal justice system actors and citizens, negatively affecting police clearance and prosecution (Anderson, 1999; Clampet-Lundquist et al., 2015; Leovy, 2015; Natapoff, 2009; Rios, 2011). Due to these issues, cases involving Black victims and victim-suspect relationships coded as involving strangers may be particularly difficult to clear and prosecute (i.e., low case solvability). A hypothesis can be deduced from these accounts:

*Hypothesis 4. Crimes with Black victims (alone and in combination with Black suspects) are expected to have significantly lower odds of clearance and prosecution when they involve stranger victim-suspect relationships.*[29]

*Figure 2. Case solvability: Moderating the effect of race on case processing outcomes*

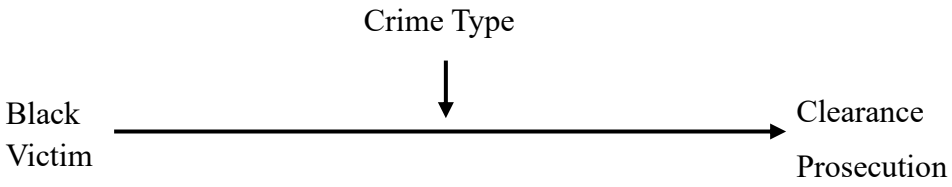



[28] The evidence against these journalistic accounts suggests that witness-related issues affect a proportion of the crimes that Black victims face. It is vital that research explores this hypothesis for other crimes.
[29] It is important to note that victim-suspect relationship may be a proxy for person devaluation under other circumstances. Victim-suspect relationship would be a result of active devaluation rather than solvability if, for example, police officers were shown to pay more attention to cases involving intimate partner relationships than to ones involving friends.

Although few studies have examined crimes other than homicide (e.g., Briggs & Opsal, 2012; Cook et al., 2019; Roberts, 2008; Roberts & Lyons, 2009), research and theory suggest that influence of devaluation – and victim race in particular – on clearance and prosecution may be especially dependent on crime type. Between 1981-2013, homicide cases (65%) have been more likely than assault (60%), and robbery (28-32%) cases to be cleared among police departments with 100 or more officers (Lum, Wellford, Scott, & Vovak, 2016), and recent news articles have paid attention to the low arrest rates among nonfatal robbery and assault cases, and the especially low solve rate of crimes involving Black and Hispanic victims (Dean, 2019; Ryley, Singer-Vine, & Campbell, 2019). Scholars have found that while robberies and aggravated assaults involving Black victims are less likely to be cleared than those involving non-Black victims, racial differences do not seem to influence the clearance of homicides (Riedel & Rinehart, 1996; Wellford & Cronin, 1999). Such findings are in line with the case devaluation approach, Garland's (1996) "defining down" strategy, and the argument that police officers and prosecutors must devote a greater amount of effort to heinous violent crimes such as homicides (Bynum et al., 1982; Gottfredson & Hindelang, 1979; Marché, 1994; Puckett & Lundman, 2003; Regoeczi et al., 2000). Because police officers and prosecutors are pressured by their departments and the public to clear and prosecute homicides, we can expect the relationship between victim race and clearance to change as a function of crime type. Specifically, *while we can expect Black victims' cases to be particularly unlikely to be cleared and accepted for prosecution when they involve crimes*

*other than homicide, homicide cases involving Black victims should have high odds of clearance and case acceptance (Hypothesis 5).*[30]

*Figure 3. Case devaluation: Moderating the effect of race on case processing outcomes*




## 3.3 SUMMARY

This chapter described crime control in modern society, and outlined the concept "dual disadvantage" to theorize the treatment of victims and suspects across criminal justice system stages. I argued that what has come across as disadvantage to scholars interested in studying suspect outcomes can alternatively be viewed as "dual disadvantage" in which Black victims *and* suspects are more disadvantaged by their criminal justice system experiences than Whites. The chapter then merged hypothesized relationships into a framework that can be used to assess the effects of a wide variety of predictors on punishment within and across various stages of criminal justice. Though the dissertation focuses on specific pathways of racial disparity across initial case processing stages, the framework can be used to assess a number of other race-related and non-race-related relationships and criminal justice decisions.[31]

[30] It is important to note that crime type can in some instances be a proxy for case solvability.
[31] There is reason to believe, for instance, that the high clearance of cases involving child victims, and the low clearance of cases involving elderly victims, can be explained by relationships between victims and offenders. Whereas elderly victims are disproportionately involved in crimes such as robbery homicides and stranger killings, that are difficult to clear (Abrams, Leon, Tardiff, Marzuk, & Sutherland, 2007; Block, 1987; Copeland, 1986; Falzon & Davis, 1998; Fox & Levin, 1991; Nelson & Huff-Corzine, 1998;

# CHAPTER 4

# SAMPLE, DATA, AND METHODS

## 4.1 ST. LOUIS CRIME

St. Louis's history, social organization, and crime levels make it an ideal study location for the purposes of testing my hypotheses. St. Louis is a highly segregated city in Eastern Missouri, bordering Illinois and made up of approximately 80 neighborhoods. During the mid- and late 1900s, it was largely affected by deindustrialization, depopulation, and segregation, and, as a result, rising crime (Gordon, 2008; Gordon, 2019; Wilson, 1987). Once a city made up of more than 850,000 residents, the city now has a population of less than 303,000 residents (U.S. Census, 2019). St. Louis' Black population is nearly four times larger than the average U.S. city. According to the most recent U.S. Census (2019), 48.1 percent of city residents are Black, and about 44.7 percent identify as White alone. About 4.2 percent of residents identify as Hispanic, 3.6 percent identify as Asian, and 2.6 percent identify as mixed race (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019). To ensure reliable statistical analysis, the sample used in the current study includes victims and suspects who identify as Black, White, and/or Hispanic.

Segregation and poverty are positively related to crime (e.g., Lauritsen & Lentz, 2019; Krivo & Peterson 1996; Massey, Condran, & Denton, 1987; Peterson & Krivo

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Titterington & Reyes, 2010; Weaver, Martin, & Petee, 2004), children are most often killed by their parents or other family members, making them less difficult to clear (Christoffel, 1984; Kajese et al., 2011; Smithey, 1998). There is also reason to believe that ethnicity, justice system action, and clearance are related. Cases with Latino victims may be less likely to be cleared than those involving White victims because of reluctance to participate among witnesses (Litwin, 2004).

1993). Segregation is one of St. Louis' defining features, and Black residents' levels of poverty and unemployment continue to be much higher than Whites' (Massey & Denton, 1989). Each year, St. Louis experiences a crime rate higher than most large U.S. cities (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2017). The study year (2015) was no exception to this pattern. Violence in St. Louis, and firearm crime in particular, reached a 20-year high in 2015, for reasons that remain unclear (Rosenfeld, 2016; Rosenfeld & Fox, 2019).

## 4.2 ST. LOUIS CASE PROCESSING

The St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department (SLMPD) is responsible for handling crimes that occur in the city of St. Louis. Specifically, when a crime comes to the attention of the SLMPD, officers are responsible for documenting what occurred in a crime report. In this report, they record information about specific crime(s) and the citizens relating to them. Police officers assign each case an initial charge or multiple charges at this point, depending on the crime(s) committed. A detective is assigned to the case and, if a suspect is identified and probable cause exists, he or she can "clear" a case either by arrest or by exceptional means. In most cases, clearance results from an arrest of a suspect, resulting in official charges and being turned over to the court for prosecution. Exceptional clearances occur when police have identified a suspect but are prevented from arresting and formally charging them due to, for instance, the death of the suspected offender, a victim's refusal to cooperate with an investigation, or the prosecution of the suspected offender in another jurisdiction. Then, during case screening, prosecutors decide whether or not to officially prosecute the case in court.

It is important to briefly describe the St. Louis political landscape and recent structural changes within the city's police department, circuit attorney's office, and mayor's office. St. Louis is a Democratic city housed within a Republican state. Long-serving Democratic Mayor Francis Slay (2001 to 2017) was replaced by Democrat Lyda Krewson in 2017. Krewson, St. Louis' first female mayor, has largely focused on public safety throughout her term (St. Louis City, 2020).

The St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department is the 27th largest police force in the United States. In 2015, the department had 1,226 sworn law enforcement officers and 54 civilian officers spanning six districts and a number of bureaus and divisions (SLMPD, 2015).[32] The police cleared 4,510, or 17 percent, of its 26,300 index crimes (SLMPD, 2015). Ninety-one of its 188 murders (48.4%), 506 of its 1,790 robberies (28.3%), 1,500 of its 3,522 aggravated assaults (42.6%), and 143 of its 263 rapes (54.4%) were recorded in the SLMPD's Annual Report as cleared by arrest (SLMPD, 2015). During the first half of 2015, the SLMPD opened (1) the Community Engagement and Organizational Development Division (CEODD), which is meant to strengthen police-community relations, and (2) the Real Time Crime Center (RTCC) to provide analytical and investigative support to officers and detectives.

The SLMPD has America's highest reported police use of deadly force per capita (Mapping Police Violence, 2020). In 2014, the SLMPD established the Force Investigative Unit (FIU), and the year 2015 saw protests against police brutality,

[32] Bureaus include the Bureau of Enforcement, Bureau of Community Affairs, and Bureau of Operations. Divisions include 911 Information, Aviation, Canine, Child Abuse, the Crime Analysis Unit, Crime Laboratory, Domestic Abuse, Fraud/Identity Theft, Gun Crimes Intelligence, Central, Homicide, Intellectual Property Crimes, Internal Affairs, Juvenile, MetroLink Unit, Mounted Police, Private Security, Real Time Crime Center, Records Division, Sex Crimes, Sex Offender Registry, Trash Task Force, and Unclaimed Property.

highlighting poor relations between people of color and the police in and around the city (Brumfield & Ford, 2015). Sam Dotson served as Police Commissioner from 2013 until 2017, when Mayor Krewson replaced him with African American Commissioner John Hayden Jr.

The St. Louis City's Circuit Attorney's Office (CAO) prosecutes most state-level crimes that occur in the city. The office houses over 60 attorneys, 20 investigators, and about 40 other staff members within its 11 divisions (CAO, 2015).[33] The office prosecutes between 5,000 and 7,000 (i.e., between 33.33 and 46.67%) of the approximately 15,000 cases reviewed each year (CAO, 2015). According to the Missouri Office of State Courts Administrator (2015), in 2015, the Circuit Attorney's Office filed 5,566 felony cases, and 1,386 misdemeanor cases, and it disposed 5,933 felony cases, and 1,416 misdemeanor cases (CAO, 2015). The CAO does not report these data by crime type.

Circuit attorneys in St. Louis are elected by city voters. Jennifer Joyce served as Circuit Attorney from 2000 to 2017, setting a record as the city's longest-serving CA before retiring and being replaced by Kim Gardner, a Democratic politician and the first African American to serve in the office. Gardner, who served within Missouri's House of Representatives prior to becoming CA, centered her campaign around reforming criminal justice institutions and rebuilding trust (Currier, 2016). Importantly for the current study, in a 2016 interview with the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, Gardner stressed the importance of witness cooperation for prosecution, saying that "some will say witnesses are afraid just

[33] Divisions include the Career Criminal Unit; Child Support Unit; Community Affairs Bureau; Drug Enforcement Taskforce; Misdemeanor Unit; Property Crimes Unit; Sex Crimes, Child Abuse, and Domestic Violence Unit; Victim Services Unit; Warrant Office; and White Collar Crime and Fraud Unit.

of the criminal element and that's why they're not coming forward, but many are also afraid of the whole criminal justice system. I want to be that unifying force to build trust so we can prosecute the most serious (cases) but at the same time prevent people from becoming victims, prevent people from becoming the most serious criminals."

Over the past 50 years, police and prosecutor agencies across the nation have adopted special policies for victims (Herman, 2010). The SLMPD has followed this trend by developing special units that focus on specific types of victims. During the study period, the SLMPD had a Child Abuse Unit (CAU), Domestic Abuse Response Team (DART) unit, and Sex Crimes Unit (SCU). The SLMPD's CAU is responsible for handling physical and sexual abuse committed against children, and it collaborates with the MO Children's Division, Children's Advocacy Services of Greater St. Louis, and other service agencies (SLMPD, 2019). The DART handles domestic violence cases. Its detectives receive specialized training and work closely with service and advocacy agencies, such as the CAO's VSU and St. Louis Family Violence Council (SLMPD, 2019). SLMPD's SCU handles rape, sodomy, and other forms of sexual assault and collaborates with CAO's VSU and the YWCA St. Louis Regional Sexual Assault Response Team (SART; SLMPD, 2019).[34] Further, the Crime Victim Advocacy Center

[34] The CAO did not have a victim services unit during the study period. Today, the CAO has within it a Victim Services Unit (VSU), Child Support Unit (CSU), and Special Victims Unit (SVU; CAO, 2019). Today, the VSU notifies victims of their rights, and provides them with information, counseling services, and "overall help and support" (CAO, 2019). Its goal is to assist "crime victims, witnesses, and their families to overcome the devastating effects of crime" (CAO, 2019). The CSU handles cases from the Family Support Division of the Missouri Department of Social Services, and the SVU prosecutes sexual crimes committed against adults and children, cases involving child physical abuse or endangerment, domestic violence cases, and homicides involving sex crimes, domestic violence, and/or children (CAO, 2019).

(CVAC) works alongside the St. Louis police and courts to provide services to victims and families of individuals who have been victims of crime (CVAC, 2020).

## 4.3 DATA SOURCE AND FILE STRUCTURE

The data for this study come from the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department, St. Louis Circuit Attorney's Office, and U.S. Census. The SLMPD data files include complaint, clearance, person (i.e., victims, offenders, identified suspects), weapons/offense, and solvability factors (e.g., witnesses, fingerprint evidence), as well as police district information, allowing for in-depth analysis of persons, cases, and police districts. The CAO data include complaint information and a case status variable indicating whether a case was prosecuted.

The unit of analysis for this study is the crime complaint. Complaints, which can involve multiple offenses, are viewed as the most appropriate unit of analysis for two reasons. First, this study is interested in exploring the treatment of both victims and suspects and the data are not organized in a way that allows for victims and suspects to be matched with specific offenses. Second, complaints, rather than individual offenses, are recorded as cleared or not cleared by the SLMPD. A given complaint contains all offenses that occurred together in a given time and place, and each offense's corresponding person, weapon, and solvability information.

The SLMPD ranks complaints according to the most serious offense. Offenses that were initially coded by the police as homicides, robberies, assaults, and rapes are included in the present study. To prevent the loss of meaningful data, cases were retained if they involved the above offenses and "other" offense types (i.e., corresponding

incidents; Kutateladze, 2018). "Other" offense types include crimes such as kidnapping/abduction, arson, shoplifting, motor vehicle theft, destruction of property, drug violations, disorderly conduct, and drunkenness. Due to the interest in particular violent offenses, cases that include an assault, robbery, or rape, but rank a different crime type as most serious, are dropped ($n$ = 354).[35-36]

The original complaint data were merged with block group-level data from the 2009–2013 American Community Survey (U.S. Census). Each complaint contains a unique identifier that was used to merge the original complaint file with clearance, person (i.e., victims, suspects, offenders), weapons/offense, and solvability factors (e.g., witnesses, fingerprint evidence), police district, and case refusal files. In the police data, person and weapons/offense files contained multiple records per complaint, and had to be reshaped to accurately code variables (e.g., average victim age, multiple weapon types, number of charges). The original sample, used in clearance analyses, includes 4,158 complaints containing Uniform Crime Report (UCR) violent Part I offenses (homicide, robbery, assault, rape), and their corresponding incidents spread across 360 block groups, and six police districts between January 1, 2015 and December 31, 2015. Each complaint therefore contains data about incidents that occurred in time and place, as well as each incident's corresponding person, case-related, police district-related, and clearance information.

[35] The current study's focus on serious violent crimes most likely means that the effects reported here are conservative. Future research should comprehensively examine the processing of property and other less serious crimes, as police and prosecutors may have more difficulty in clearing and prosecuting such crimes, but also more discretion in handling them (Cordner, 1989; Coupe, 2014; Paré, Felson, & Ouimet, 2007).
[36] Crimes committed against police officers, and ones that coded businesses, financial institutes, the government, religious organizations, and/or society as victims, were removed from analyses due to the interest in violent crimes involving non-police, person victims ($n$ = 551).

The original unit of analysis in the CAO data was the suspect. Cases including multiple records per complaint were reshaped to accurately record whether *any* suspect associated with a complaint was prosecuted. Complaint-level data were then merged with the original clearance file using complaint numbers. The refusal sample includes all complaints that were cleared by the police and accepted or rejected by the St. Louis Circuit Attorney's Office by the end of 2018 ($n$ = 1,438). This includes 87.5 percent, or 1,438 of the original sample of 1,643 cleared cases, and 38.9%, of the original 4,158 complaints in the sample (see Table 4 below).

There are various possible explanations for the discrepancies between the number of cleared cases and the total number of cases included in the case refusal sample. First, a number of prosecutor cases included seven- rather than eight-digit complaint numbers and could not be matched with the original data. Problems with overlapping case record

**Table 4. Clearance and Case Refusal Sample Comparison**

| | **Clearance Sample** Total N(%); Cleared N(%) | | **Case Refusal Sample** Total N(%); Refused N(%) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Homicide** | 173 (4.2%) | 77 (44.5%) | 61 (4.2%) | 21 (34.4%) |
| **Rape** | 128 (3.1%) | 60 (46.9%) | 48 (3.3%) | 32 (66.7%) |
| **Robbery** | 1,553 (37.3%) | 420 (27.0%) | 334 (23.2%) | 179 (53.6%) |
| **Assault** | 2,304 (55.4%) | 1,086 (47.1%) | 995 (69.2%) | 631 (63.4%) |
| **Total** | *4,158 (100.0%)* | *1,643 (39.5%)* | *1,438 (100.0%)* | *863 (60.0%)* |

systems in loosely coupled bureaucracies, such as law enforcement and prosecutor offices, and arguments for interagency information sharing, are well-documented in the

literature (e.g., Hagan, 1973, 1989; Hagan et al., 1979; Jackson, Webster, & Hagan, 1982; Reiss, 1971; Weick, 1982). Further, suspects within complaints may have been incarcerated for other offenses, or may have passed away (i.e., exceptional clearance). Additionally, cases may have been transferred to another jurisdiction.

It is also important to note that the original complaint data matched with 1,616 prosecutor records. This means that a small sample of cases ($n$ = 178) made it to the CAO, but were not coded as cleared by the SLMPD. The most likely reason for this disparity is that an agency other than SLMPD cleared the complaint and brought it to the prosecutor's office, or the complaint was evaluated by prosecutors prior to official clearance. Because St. Louis police data are focused on in the current study, these cases are excluded from the case refusal sample.

### 4.3.1 VARIABLES

*Outcome Variables*

The dissertation aims to examine case clearance and decisions to prosecute cases. The main outcomes of interest are clearance and case refusal. A complaint is coded as 1 (cleared) if one or more suspect(s) were identified for one or more incident(s), leading the SLMPD to code the incident as "cleared" by the end of the 2018 year.[37] Complaints are otherwise coded as 0 (not cleared).[38] For the case refusal outcome, a complaint is coded

[37] A number of variables, such as victim age and sex, have been shown to impact the "survival time" of a case, or the number of days until a case is cleared (Regoeczi, Jarvis, & Reidel, 2008) or sentenced (BJS, 2009). Since complaints may clear after the study period's end, censoring poses an issue. A three-year period was deemed sufficient, as most arrests (93% of homicides and 96% of aggravated assaults) occur within 90 days after a crime occurs (Roberts & Lyons, 2009), and most violent felonies (62%) are sentenced within 12 months post-arrest (BJS, 2009), though the median time between arrest and sentencing for murder remains higher (505 days) than for other crime types.

[38] The SLMPD does not consistently update its case status field, which includes information pertaining to types of clearance (e.g., arrest clearance and exceptional clearance). Thus, a limitation of this study is its

as 1 if any charges within the complaint are presented to the prosecutor's office *and* all charges are refused by the CAO. Complaints are coded as 0 if any charges within the complaint are presented to the prosecutor's office and accepted for prosecution.

*Person Devaluation*

Since complaints, and not persons or individual incidents, are the unit of analysis in this study, victim, suspect, and case characteristics are collapsed and studied at the complaint level. Victim race is included as a main predictor variable with three distinct categories: Black victim(s), Black and White victims, and White victim(s) (reference category).

The models control for a number of other victim characteristics that have been related to clearance. Victim sex is measured with three categories: male victim(s), male and female victims, and female victim(s) (reference category).[39] Victim age is a continuous measure representing the average age of victims within a complaint. A squared victim age term is also included in the model to account for possible non-

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inability to distinguish between clearance types. Though studies typically combine clearance types (Addington, 2006; Alderden & Lavery, 2007; Lee, 2005; Mouzos & Muller, 2001; Puckett & Lundman, 2003; Regoeczi et al., 2000) and multiple studies have demonstrated similar results across clearance types (Litwin, 2004; Litwin & Xu, 2007), exceptions to such studies exist and caution must be taken in interpreting these results (refer to Chapter 2 discussion of Spohn and Tellis, 2019). Jarvis and Regoeczi (2009) found different predictors across types of clearances, and Riedel and Boulahanis (2007) caution against including exceptional clearances in total clearances, as clearance percentages might be inflated.

[39] The traditional devaluation perspective views males as being valued over females (Black, 1976), but scholars suggest that females are in fact more readily provided with a legitimate, or "ideal victim," status that makes them a priority for law enforcement (Christie, 1986). Empirical evidence regarding victim sex remains unclear. Clearance rates have been found to be similar for male and female victims or in fact higher for crimes involving female victims, suggesting partial support for the "ideal victim" hypothesis (Addington, 2006; Geberth, 1996; Lee, 2005; Litwin, 2004; Litwin & Xu, 2007; Regoeczi, et al., 2008; Roberts, 2007; Wellford & Cronin, 1999; Wolfgang, 1958). Mixed results regarding victim gender might be explained by female victims' disproportionate involvement in both crimes that are more easy to solve (e.g., intimate partner homicide) and homicides that are more difficult to solve, such as those committed after a rape (FBI, 2009). In the courts literature, cases involving female victims tend to be more harshly sentenced than ones involving male victims (Curry, 2010; Curry et al., 2004; Franklin & Fearn, 2008).

linearity.[40] The model includes a variable to control for complaints containing victims of multiple age categories.

Suspect information is at least partly endogenous. Clearance is a function of this information. Approximately 20 percent of cases in the dataset were missing suspect information at the clearance stage of analysis. Victim characteristics are therefore analyzed on their own initially, and additional analyses are conducted that allow for the examination of suspect characteristics in relation to clearance and case refusal. Specifically, suspect race is analyzed on its own and in combination with victim race (i.e., victim-suspect racial dyads). First, suspect race is measured as a categorical variable with three categories: Black suspect(s), Black and White suspects, and White suspect(s) (reference category). Victim-suspect racial dyad models include nine dyads: cases with Black victim(s) and suspect(s) (BvBs; reference category in main models), White victim(s) and suspect(s) (WvWs), Black and White victims and Black and White suspects (MvMs), Black victim(s) and White suspect(s) (BvWs), Black victim(s) and Black and White suspects (BvMs), White victim(s) and Black suspect(s) (WvBs; reference category in interaction models), White victim(s) and Black and White suspects (WvMs), Black and White victims and Black suspect(s) (MvBs), and Black and White victims and White suspect(s) (MvWs). Since crimes are only prosecuted once suspects are available, and a number of case processing studies have underlined the importance of including victim and defendant race in studies of the courts (Baldus, Woodworth, & Pulaski, 1990; Bowers & Pierce, 1980; Gross & Mauro, 1984; Kingsnorth et al., 1998; Paternoster,

[40] Studies have found that while young children are more likely than middle-aged victims to have their crimes cleared, crimes committed against the elderly are more difficult to solve (Addington, 2006; Cardarelli & Cavanagh, 1992; Puckett & Lundman, 2003; Regoeczi, 2018; Riedel & Rinehart, 1996).

1984; Sorensen & Wallace, 1999; Spohn, 1994; Spohn & Spears, 1996; Walsh, 1987; Wolfgang & Riedel, 1973), suspect race is included as a main predictor variable in case refusal models without concern about missing data.

Because male defendants are typically more harshly punished than female defendants (Bontrager, Barrick, & Stupi, 2013; Koons-Witt, 2002; Ulmer et al., 2007), suspect sex is included as a control variable. It is measured categorically and includes male suspect(s) and male and female suspects, with female suspect(s) as the reference category. Suspect age is a continuous measure and represents the average age of suspects within a complaint.[41] A squared suspect age term is also included in the model to account for possible non-linearity. The model includes a variable to control for complaints containing suspects of multiple age categories.

Variables that relate victims to offenders, most notably victim-suspect relationship, are at least partly endogenous, with relationships between suspects and victims improving likelihood of clearance (Lee, 2005; Roberts, 2007; Roberts & Lyons, 2009). A large number of cases in the original dataset ($n$ = 1,045, or 25.1 % of total complaints) were missing victim-suspect information.[42] The variable is controlled for in all models that include information about cases. Victim-suspect relationships are based on NIBRS categories and are categorized as all stranger, all within family, all outside of family but known to victim, all other relationships, relationship unknown, relationship category not applicable, and multiple victim-suspect relationship categories. "All within family" includes spouse, common-law spouse, parent, sibling, child, grandparent,

[41] Results regarding suspect/defendant age remain unclear (Wu & Spohn, 2009).
[42] It is also important to note that victim-suspect relationship can be a proxy for person devaluation or the case solvability thesis. If victim-suspect relationship is still significant when controlling for solvability-specific factors, then it can be considered likely due to devaluation.

grandchild, in-law, stepparent, stepchild, stepsibling, other family member, and legal guardian. “All outside of family but known to victim” includes acquaintance, friend, neighbor, babysittee, boyfriend/girlfriend, child of boyfriend/girlfriend, homosexual relationship, ex-spouse, employee, employer, otherwise known, former employee, ex-boy/girlfriend, and roommate. “All other relationships” includes the NIBRS category of victim was offender. Crimes involving strangers are hypothesized to be least likely to be cleared and prosecuted, and this category is used as the reference category to allow for comparisons with other relationships (Jarvis et al., 2017). In interaction analyses, within family relationship replaces stranger relationship as the reference category.

Within the clearance literature, Hispanic victims’ cases have been found to be less likely to be solved (Alderden & Lavery, 2007; Litwin, 2004; Roberts & Lyons, 2011). In the courts literature, research finds mixed results regarding victim ethnicity (Curry, 2010), but Hispanic/Latino defendants have been found to be punished more severely than non-Hispanic defendants (Caravelis et al., 2011; Ulmer, 2012). In the current study, victim ethnicity (non-Hispanic and Hispanic as reference category) is controlled for in all models that include victim demographics, and suspect ethnicity is controlled for in models that include suspect characteristics. There were zero cases containing both Hispanic and non-Hispanic victims or suspects, making multiple ethnicities control variables unnecessary.

*Case Devaluation*

The main case devaluation indicator included in the analyses is crime type. Cases can include a combination of homicide, assault, robbery, and rape offense types, or a

combination of these offense types plus "other" crimes. Since robberies require "force or fear," a high percentage of robberies involve assaults. If for instance, a person stabs someone and takes his or her wallet, then that is considered both an assault and a robbery. If an individual points a gun at someone during a robbery, then he or she has committed an assault with a deadly weapon and a robbery. Because assaults are highly correlated with robberies, they, and not homicides, are designated the omitted reference category. A control variable flags cases with multiple crime types. Importantly, crime type can operate in the proposed framework as a proxy for case devaluation or the case solvability thesis. A number of solvability-specific factors are controlled for that explain why some crimes are harder to clear and prosecute (see below). If crime type is still significant when controlling for the factors discussed below, then it is considered most likely due to devaluation.

It is important to note that while court case processing models typically control for a number of indicators that would act as proxies for case devaluation (e.g., plea deal status, pretrial detention, attorney type, and bail amount), this information does not come into play until after case screening and is therefore not included in the current dissertation.

*Case Solvability*

The main case solvability indicator of interest is weapon type. Weapon type includes firearm, knife, personal weapon (e.g., fist, feet), other weapon, unknown weapon, multiple weapon types, and no weapon categories. Since they are more likely than other weapon types to involve victim-suspect contact and to leave physical evidence,

personal weapons are the omitted reference category (Puckett & Lundman, 2003). Firearm crimes are expected to be less likely to be cleared and prosecuted compared to those committed with personal weapons (Addington, 2006; Litwin, 2004; Litwin & Xu, 2007; Mouzos & Muller, 2001; Puckett & Lundman, 2003; Regoeczi et al., 2000; Rydberg & Pizarro, 2014).

A number of additional control variables are included in the analyses. Crimes are broken up into three time periods to reflect common police "shifts" in St. Louis: between 8 a.m. and 3:59 p.m. (first shift), between 4 p.m. and 11:59 p.m. (second shift), and between midnight and 7:59 a.m. (third shift). The first shift is the reference category due to the advantages of policing during daylight (Regoeczi et al., 2008). Because prior research has reported that crimes occurring on weekdays have higher clearance likelihoods than those that occur on weekends (Regoeczi et al., 2008), all models include a day of week variable (1 = weekday/0 = weekend). Complaints involving injuries to victims have been found to be more likely to be cleared and prosecuted than crimes involving no injury (Alderden & Ullman, 2012; Taylor et al., 2009). Victim injuries are separated into no/unknown injury, minor injury, major injury, and multiple injury types. These variables are coded positively if at least one victim within a complaint was injured, with the exception of no/unknown injury. Following Roberts and Lyons (2009), the no/unknown injury category (reference category) includes none/unknown injury and probable/not apparent injury types. Minor and major injuries include cases coded by the police as involving minor injury, apparent broken bones, other major injuries, possible internal injury, loss of teeth, severe laceration, and unconsciousness. Because crimes committed in the home have higher clearance likelihoods, but lower prosecution

likelihoods, than those that occur outside of the home (Addington, 2006; Mouzos & Muller, 2001; Puckett & Lundman, 2003; Roberts, 2007), models also control for incident location and in particular whether incidents were coded as taking place in the home (i.e., domestic).

About one-third of complaints in the clearance sample include multiple charges (*n* = 1,256, or 30.2%) and involve more than one victim (*n* = 1,189, or 28.6%) or suspect (*n* = 1,094, or 26.3%). The models therefore control for number of charges, number of victims, and number of suspects nested within a complaint. In addition, all models control for whether offenses are attempted (0) or completed (1).[43]

*Justice System Action*

A witness variable is used as a measure of justice system action across case processing stages. If a witness (i.e., an individual other than a suspect or victim) was present at the time of a crime, it is coded as 1 and 0 otherwise.

*Group Devaluation*

Association devaluation, the key group devaluation construct, is measured using block group crime counts. Since research suggests that concentrated disadvantage and racial composition might be important for case processing, even when solvability characteristics are considered (Caravelis et al., 201; Litwin & Xu, 2007; Mancik, Parker, & Williams, 2018; Paré, Felson, & Ouimet, 2007; Petersen, 2017a; Ulmer et al., 2007;

[43] Only robbery cases are coded by the police as attempted. Since attempted crimes are cleared and prosecuted less often than completed ones, completion status is viewed as an important control (Taylor et al., 2009; Walfield, 2016).

Wang & Mears, 2010), main models control for these variables. Principal components factor analysis was used to combine the percentage of residents living in poverty and the percentage of female-headed households into a measure of concentrated disadvantage. Racial composition records the percentage of Black residents in each block group. Consistent with prior research, the models control for block group area population (Borg & Parker, 2001; Litwin, 2004; Wolfgang, 1958).

Because over one-third ($n$ = 1,513) of complaints are nested within block groups that transcend district boundaries, a variable controls for whether a block group is cross-classified into multiple police districts. Specifically, a dummy variable was computed to flag block groups that are cross-classified into multiple districts, and cross-classified block groups were recoded to reflect the districts within which the majority of their land areas fall.

*Workload and Resources*

Workload and resource characteristics include detective workload and police district crime rates. Detective workload is measured using the ratio of UCR violent Part I crime counts per district over detective averages (2015) per district.[44] Crime rates record the number of violent crimes that occurred in each district over the study period, divided by 1,000 residents.

[44] Variance inflation factor (VIF) statistics were calculated to assess multicollinearity among police district variables. Multicollinearity was an issue when patrol officer workload was included as a control variable alongside detective workload and was thus removed. From an organizational standpoint, this makes sense as one overarching police agency likely distributes patrol officers and detectives proportionally.

*Data Limitations*

A number of characteristics that have been proposed to relate to case processing are, unfortunately, not available for examination at this time. Though the dataset contains rich case and police district data, witness cooperation, strength of evidence, and other potentially relevant variables pertaining to investigative effort are not available in the dataset (Baldus & Woodworth, 2009; Wellford et al., 2019; Baldus, Woodworth, Zuckerman, Weiner, & Grosso, 2009). Since St. Louis has only one prosecutorial office that covers all districts, court workload cannot be measured at the case refusal stage. Further, because prosecutors are not assigned to specific complaints in the database until after a case is accepted for prosecution, prosecutorial workload cannot be measured. It is important to acknowledge that the data are unable to determine whether police and prosecutors are purposely behaving in ways that promote disparities in case processing.

Studies of courts find prior criminal history (e.g., Albonetti, 1987; Ulmer et al., 2011a; Ulmer et al., 2011b; Wooldredge et al., 2015) and socioeconomic status (Wooldredge, 1998) to be important predictors of case processing outcomes. For example, defendants who have prior criminal records (Albonetti, 1987; Ulmer et al., 2011a; Ulmer et al., 2011b; Wooldredge et al., 2015) and low incomes (Wooldredge, 1998) tend to be harshly punished. While they may be important person devaluation or solvability indicators, the current study is unable to control for the prior criminal histories or socioeconomic statuses of victims or suspects.[45] Further, court case processing appears

[45] Socioeconomic status and prior criminal history can act as personal devaluation indicators, for example, if a police officer spends less time and effort on a case committed against a low-income person. Prior criminal history can also act as a solvability indicator. For instance, a person with extensive robbery histories may use a particular type of robbery strategy with respect to gun type, location, victim selection, etc.

to be dependent on perceptions of victim morality (Beichner & Spohn, 2005; Kalven & Zeisel, 1966; McCahill et al., 1979; Reskin & Visher, 1986; Spears & Spohn, 1997), victim credibility (Littrell, 1979), and moral risk-taking behaviors of victims (Beichner & Spohn, 2005; Kalven & Zeisel, 1966; McCahill et al., 1979; Spears & Spohn, 1997), and the current study is unable to determine whether this is the case for police clearance or prosecution. Studies also find that crime motives matter for case-processing outcomes (Jiao, 2007; Lee, 2005; Pastia, Davies, & Wu, 2017), and this variable can act as a proxy for case devaluation or the situational thesis. Cases involving gangs or drug-related matters, for instance, might be actively devalued by police officers or prosecutors who do not view such crimes as deserving of attention. They might, however, simply be more difficult to solve and prosecute. The current dissertation is unable to control for crime motive.

The current study does not have access to criminal justice system actor demographics, perceptions, or behaviors, which are important to consider in studies of disparities (Clair & Winter, 2016; Johnson, 2006; Wooldredge, 2010; Ulmer, 2019). Further, the extent to which the police and prosecutors accurately perceive the races and ethnicities of persons that they come into contact with is unclear (Eberhardt, 2019). The current study is unable to determine whether race was accurately recorded by criminal justice system personnel, and this may have important implications for research results. Relatedly, variables such as witness and victim-suspect relationship were recorded by the police, and the study is unable to pinpoint potential inaccuracies, or any changes that may have occurred between clearance and case screening stages. In-depth analysis of case files would be required to measure these variables.

### 4.3.2 ANALYTICAL STRATEGY

The first stage of analysis involves calculating descriptive statistics. Clearance, case refusal, and independent variables are described using frequencies and means, and relationships between independent and dependent variables are examined.

Multilevel logistic regressions are then used to examine the effects of race and other theoretically relevant predictors on clearance and case refusal. Models include random intercepts for block groups ($n$ = 360) and clustered standard errors for police districts ($n$ = 6).[46] A coefficient represents the change in the odds that a complaint is cleared or refused for a unit change in the covariate of interest when all other covariates are held constant. All models report coefficients, robust standard errors, and odds ratios.

Main analyses are organized into clearance and case refusal sections. Each set of models includes victim, victim and suspect, and victim-suspect racial dyad models. Each section begins with an examination of race and the outcome variable for the three model types (victim characteristics, victim and suspect characteristics, and victim-suspect racial dyads). Models then add person, case, neighborhood, and police district characteristics to examine the effects of race on each outcome, and to determine which other theoretically relevant indicators are associated with case processing. Finally, interaction terms are added to sets of full models to determine whether victim-suspect relationship and/or crime type change the effects of victim race (on its own and in combination with suspect race) on clearance and/or case refusal. It is important to note that each of the models will

[46] Random effects allow for the determination of whether outcomes differ across police districts and block groups. Level one intercepts and effects that vary significantly across police districts and block groups are treated as random effects in each model (Hox, 2010). All other effects are treated as fixed.

be estimated for applicable cases (i.e., cleared cases will be examined for the analysis of case screening).

# CHAPTER 5

# DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

## 5.1 SUMMARY STATISTICS FOR VIOLENT CRIME COMPLAINTS

### 5.1.1 CLEARANCE SAMPLE

Table 5 presents basic summary statistics for violent crime complaints in St. Louis, Missouri (2015), including numbers of charges, victims, and suspects per complaint, as well as the final sample size by offense type. Most crimes contain one charge, one victim, and one suspect. Charge counts range from one to 11, with the majority of cases with multiple charges involving two or three charges (19.2% and 6.6% of the total sample, respectively). Complaints have up to 12 victims, with the majority of cases involving multiple victims including two victims (17.5% of the total sample).[47] The number of suspects in a complaint ranges from one to nine, with about 18.3 percent of the total sample involving two suspects.[48] In looking at cases containing victim and suspect information (78.9% of the total sample), we can see that the majority of cases (52.1%) involve one victim and one suspect. Approximately 4.2 percent of the total complaints involve homicides. Assaults, robberies, and rapes are ranked as the most serious offenses in 55.4, 37.4, and 3.1 percent of complaints, respectively.[49]

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[47] About 6.2 and 2.6 percent of the total sample involving three and four victims, respectively. Less than three percent (2.4%) of complaints with known victim numbers have five or more victims.

[48] About 5.5 percent of the total sample involves three suspects. Complaints involving four or more suspects account for about three percent of the sample in which offender numbers are known.

[49] While about half of homicides ($n$ = 87; 50.3%) involve multiple charges, 17.8 percent of robberies ($n$ = 276), 28.1 percent of rapes ($n$ = 36), and 37.2 percent of assaults ($n$ = 857) include multiple charges. Homicides are also more likely (43.4%; $n$ = 75) than assault (33.4%; $n$ = 769), robbery (21.8%; $n$ = 338), and rape (5.5%; $n$ = 7) complaints to involve multiple victims. Robbery complaints (40.4%; $n$ = 627), are most likely to involve multiple suspects, followed by homicide (16.8%; $n$ = 29), assault (17.9%; $n$ = 413), and rape (19.5%; $n$ = 25) complaints.

**Table 5. Violent Crime Complaint Summary Statistics (*N* = 4,158)**

| Variable Category | Variable Name | N (%) | N (%) Cleared | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Charge number | Single charge | 2,902 (69.8%) | 945 (32.6%) | | |
| | Multiple charges | 1,256 (30.2%) | 698 (55.6%) | | |
| | Number of charges | 6,250 | | 1.5 | 1.0 |
| Victim number | Single victim | 2,908 (69.9%) | 1,127 (38.8%) | | |
| | Multiple victims | 1,189 (28.6%) | 485 (40.8%) | | |
| | *Missing/unknown victim number* | 61 (1.5%) | 31 (50.8%) | | |
| | Number of victims | 6,221 | | 1.5 | 1.0 |
| Suspect number | Single suspect | 2,243 (53.9%) | 1,174 (52.3%) | | |
| | Multiple suspects | 1,094 (26.3%) | 466 (42.6%) | | |
| | *Missing/unknown suspect number* | 821 (19.8%) | 3 (0.4%) | | |
| | Number of suspects | 5,765 | | 1.5 | 0.87 |
| Number dyads | Single victim; single suspect | 1,711 (41.1%) | 873 (51.0%) | | |
| | Single victim; multiple suspects | 654 (15.7%) | 252 (38.5%) | | |
| | Multiple victims; single suspect | 488 (11.7%) | 275 (56.4%) | | |
| | Multiple victims; multiple suspects | 429 (10.3%) | 209 (48.7%) | | |
| | *Missing/unknown number dyad* | 876 (21.1%) | 34 (3.9%) | | |
| Crime type | Homicide | 173 (4.2%) | 77 (44.5%) | | |
| | Robbery | 1,553 (37.4%) | 420 (27.0%) | | |
| | Assault | 2,304 (55.4%) | 1,086 (47.1%) | | |
| | Rape | 128 (3.1%) | 60 (46.9%) | | |

Of the total 4,158 complaints in the sample, 1,643 (39.5%) were cleared. The majority of complaints in the sample therefore remain uncleared. Less than half (44.5%) of homicides, assaults, and rapes were cleared, and robbery clearance is particularly low at 27 percent. These numbers are lower than homicide (65%), assault (60%), and robbery (28-32%) clearance averages found among police departments with 100 or more officers between 1981-2013 (Lum et al., 2016). It is worth noting that complaints involving multiple charges have higher clearance levels than ones involving one charge, but in

contrast to expectations, complaints involving one known suspect appear to have higher likelihoods of clearance than ones involving multiple known suspects.

### 5.1.2 CASE REFUSAL SAMPLE

Table 6 presents basic summary statistics for violent crime complaints that were reported as cleared *and* recorded in the St. Louis Circuit Attorney's Office record system by the end of 2018. This includes 87.5 percent, or 1,438 of the original 1,643 cleared cases, and 38.9% of the original 4,158 complaints. Most crimes retained in the sample contain one charge, one victim, and one suspect.[50] As was the case in the original sample, about four and three percent of the 1,438 total complaints involve homicides and rapes, respectively. The case refusal sample includes a larger proportion of assaults (69.2% of the revised sample) and a smaller proportion of robberies (23.2% of the revised sample) than the original sample.

For each crime type, the proportions of cases containing multiple charges are higher than in the original sample. About 59 percent of homicides involve multiple charges, compared to the 33.2 percent of robberies, 37.5 percent of rapes, and 46 percent of assaults that include multiple charges. Homicides are also more likely than other

[50] Charge counts still range from one to 11, with the majority of cases with multiple charges involving two or three charges (23.6% and 10.2% of the total sample, respectively). Complaints have up to 10 victims in the revised sample, with the majority of multiple victims cases including two victims (17.7% of the total sample). Nearly seven percent of the sample complaints involve three victims, 2.4 percent of complaints involve four victims, and less than three percent of the sample has five or more victims. Victim number data are missing for 23 robbery cases (6.9% of total robberies) and 2 assault cases (0.2% of total assaults). The majority of cases involving multiple suspects still involve two suspects (18.7% of the total sample. About six percent of the sample complaints involve three suspects, almost three percent of cases involve four suspects, and complaints involving five or more suspects account for less than one percent of total complaints.

crimes to involve multiple victims.[51] Robberies are most likely to involve multiple suspects. In declining order from there are homicides, assaults, and rapes.[52]

**Table 6. Violent Crime Complaint Summary Statistics (*N* = 1,438)**

| Variable Category | Variable Name | N (%) | N (%) Refused | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Charge number | Single charge | 815 (56.7%) | 548 (67.2%) | | |
| | Multiple charges | 623 (43.3%) | 309 (49.6%) | | |
| | Number of charges | 2,625 | | 1.8 | 1.3 |
| Victim number | Single victim | 993 (69.1%) | 636 (64.0%) | | |
| | Multiple victims | 420 (29.2%) | 213 (50.7%) | | |
| | *Missing/unknown victim number* | 25 (1.7%) | 8 (32.0%) | | |
| | Number of known victims | 2,125 | | 1.5 | 1.0 |
| Suspect number | Single suspect | 1,029 (71.6%) | 613 (59.6%) | | |
| | Multiple suspects | 409 (28.4%) | 244 (59.7%) | | |
| | Number of suspects | 2,065 | | 1.4 | 0.85 |
| Number dyads | Single victim; single suspect | 768 (53.4%) | 509 (66.3%) | | |
| | Single victim; multiple suspects | 225 (15.7%) | 127 (56.4%) | | |
| | Multiple victims; single suspect | 240 (16.7%) | 97 (40.4%) | | |
| | Multiple victims; multiple suspects | 180 (12.5%) | 116 (64.4%) | | |
| | *Missing/unknown number dyad* | 25 (1.7%) | 8 (32.0%) | | |
| Crime type | Homicide | 61 (4.2%) | 20 (32.8%) | | |
| | Robbery | 334 (23.2%) | 177 (53.0%) | | |
| | Assault | 995 (69.2%) | 628 (63.1%) | | |
| | Rape | 48 (3.4%) | 32 (66.7%) | | |

A minority of complaints in the sample (40.4%) were accepted for prosecution. Homicides appear to be taken most seriously, with a large majority of them (67.2%) being accepted. Although nearly half of assaults and rapes were cleared by the police, only 36.9 and 33.3 percent of cleared assault and rape cases were accepted for

[51] About 44.3 percent of homicides involve them, compared to 32.2, 21.3, and 4.2 percent of assaults, robberies, and rapes, respectively.
[52] About 44.3 percent of robberies involve multiple suspects, followed by homicide (34.4%), assault (23%), and rape (22.9%) complaints.

prosecution, respectively. Whereas less than 30 percent of robberies were cleared, about 47 percent of robberies that made it to the CAO were prosecuted. These results are in line with case screening research demonstrating that most homicides result in official charging (Pyrooz et al., 2011), but not with research demonstrating high charging likelihoods for various violent crimes in Kansas City (Spohn & Holleran, 2000) and New York (Kutateladze, 2018), suggesting that case screening likely varies by jurisdiction.

In addition to having lower clearance levels, complaints involving only one victim have lower prosecution levels (36%) than those involving multiple victims (49.3%). As is to be expected, prosecution likelihoods appear to be higher for complaints involving multiple charges (50.4% accepted) than cases involving one charge (32.8% accepted).

## 5.2 VICTIM CHARACTERISTICS

### 5.2.1 CLEARANCE SAMPLE

Victim characteristics are described in Table 7. Males make up the majority of victims (51.4% of cases in which victim sex is known), and the combined average age of victims in a complaint is about 33 years.[53] Complaints involving only male victims have lower clearance levels than ones involving female victims and male and female victims.

Approximately one percent of cases involve Hispanic victims, compared to the nearly 94 percent of cases recorded by the police as involving non-Hispanic victims. While just over 30 percent of cases involving Hispanic victims were cleared, almost 40

[53] When victims were divided into 12 and under, 13-17, 18-29, and 30-59, 60+, multiple victim ages, and unknown victim age categories, most complaints involved victims from the 18-29 and 30-59 age categories (34.7% and 38.4% of the total sample, respectively), and about 15.5 percent of complaints involve victims of multiple age categories.

percent of cases involving non-Hispanic victims were cleared, which is consistent with the Hispanic victim devaluation thesis.

**Table 7. Victim Characteristics and Clearance (*N* = 4,158)**

| Variable Category | Variable Name | N (%) | N (%) Cleared | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sex | All male victim(s) | 2,105 (50.6%) | 671 (31.9%) | | |
| | All female victim(s) | 1,351 (32.5%) | 678 (50.2%) | | |
| | Male and female victims | 641 (15.4%) | 263 (41.0%) | | |
| | *Missing/unknown victim sex* | 61 (1.5%) | 31 (50.8%) | | |
| Race | All Black victim(s) | 2,835 (68.2%) | 1,089 (38.4%) | | |
| | All White victim(s) | 1,085 (26.1%) | 431 (39.7%) | | |
| | Black and White victims | 171 (4.1%) | 90 (52.6%) | | |
| | *Missing/unknown victim race* | 67 (1.6%) | 33 (49.3%) | | |
| Ethnicity | All Hispanic victim(s) | 59 (1.4%) | 18 (30.5%) | | |
| | All non-Hispanic victim(s) | 3,903 (93.9%) | 1,547 (39.6%) | | |
| | *Missing/unknown victim ethnicity* | 196 (4.7%) | 78 (39.8%) | | |
| Age | Average age | 4,080 (98.1%) | | 33.1 | 13.8 |
| | Victim(s) of one age category | 3,435 (82.6%) | 1,341 (39.0%) | | |
| | Victims of multiple age categories | 645 (15.5%) | 268 (41.6%) | | |
| | *Missing/unknown victim age* | 78 (1.9%) | 36 (46.2%) | | |

Most cases in the sample involve Black victims (69.3% of cases involving known victim race). As can be seen in Table 8, Black victims account for especially high proportions of homicide (89.6%) victims, and the majority of assault, rape, and robbery victims. Approximately 38.4 percent of cases involving Black victims were cleared, compared to 52.6 percent of complaints in which both Black and White citizens were victimized, and 39.7 percent of cases involving White victims. Differences in clearance appear in examining complaint clearance by offense type (Table 8). Homicide arrest clearance for White victims appears to be especially high (92.3%) in comparison to cases

involving Black victims (40.6%) and Black and White victims (40.0%), though the numbers of homicide complaints involving White victims and Black and White victims are small compared to those involving Black victims. The lack of similarly large racial differences in clearance among other crime types suggests that clearance of rapes, assaults, and robberies may be explained by factors other than victim race, and that studies limited to explaining homicide clearance may not be generalizable to other types of violent crimes.

**Table 8. Victim Race by Crime Type for Clearance Sample (*N* = 4,158)**

| | **Homicide** | | **Assault** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Victim Race** | **N(%)** | **N (%) Cleared** | **N(%)** | **N (%) Cleared** |
| Black victim(s) | 155 (89.6%) | 63 (40.6%) | 1,752 (76.0%) | 779 (44.5%) |
| White victim(s) | 13 (7.5%) | 12 (92.3%) | 436 (18.9%) | 241(55.3%) |
| Black and White victims | 5 (2.9%) | 2 (40.0%) | 102 (4.4%) | 62 (60.8%) |
| *Missing victim race* | 0 (0.0%) | N/A | 14 (0.6%) | 4 (28.6%) |
| | **Robbery** | | **Rape** | |
| | **N(%)** | **N (%) Cleared** | **N(%)** | **N (%) Cleared** |
| Black victim(s) | 843 (54.3%) | 209 (24.8%) | 85 (66.4%) | 38 (44.7%) |
| White victim(s) | 593 (38.2%) | 156 (26.3%) | 43 (33.6%) | 22 (51.2%) |
| Black and White victims | 64 (4.1%) | 26 (40.6%) | 0 (0.0%) | N/A |
| *Missing victim race* | 53 (3.4%) | 29 (54.7%) | 0 (0.0%) | N/A |

### 5.2.2 CASE REFUSAL SAMPLE

Victim characteristics for the case refusal sample are described in Table 9. Males make up about 42 percent of victims in the revised sample, and the combined average age of victims in a complaint is 32.4 years of age (*SD* = 12.9), which is about one year

younger than in the clearance sample.[54] In contrast to clearance statistics suggesting that female victims' cases are prioritized by the criminal justice system, but in line with the female devaluation hypothesis suggested by Black (1976), a large proportion of cases involving female victims were refused by prosecutors (64.5%). Complaints involving male victims have a 59.3 percent refusal rate, compared to the 50.9 percent of refused cases involving male and female victims.

**Table 9. Victim Characteristics and Case Refusal (*N* = 1,438)**

| Variable Category | Variable Name | N (%) | N (%) Refused | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sex | All male victim(s) | 597 (41.5%) | 354 (59.3%) | | |
| | All female victim(s) | 586 (40.8%) | 378 (64.5%) | | |
| | Male and female victims | 230 (16.0%) | 117 (50.9%) | | |
| | *Missing/unknown victim sex* | 25 (1.7%) | 8 (32.0%) | | |
| Race | All Black victim(s) | 970 (67.5%) | 649 (66.9%) | | |
| | All White victim(s) | 363 (25.2%) | 173 (47.7%) | | |
| | Black and White victims | 78 (5.4%) | 26 (33.3%) | | |
| | *Missing/unknown victim race* | 27 (1.9%) | 9 (33.3%) | | |
| Ethnicity | All Hispanic victim(s) | 17 (1.2%) | 10 (58.8%) | | |
| | All non-Hispanic victim(s) | 1,355 (94.2%) | 824 (60.8%) | | |
| | *Missing/unknown victim ethnicity* | 66 (4.6%) | 29 (43.9%) | | |
| Age | Average age | 1,408 (97.9%) | | 32.4 | 12.9 |
| | Victim(s) of one age category | 1,179 (82.0%) | 743 (63.0%) | | |
| | Victims of multiple age categories | 229 (15.9%) | 109 (47.6%) | | |
| | *Missing/unknown victim age* | 30 (2.1%) | 11 (36.7%) | | |

In line with the clearance sample statistics, approximately one percent of cases involve only Hispanic victims, compared to the 94.3 percent of cases involving only non-

[54] Complaints involving male victims are more frequent than ones involving females or victims of multiple sex categories for homicides (72.1% of homicides) and robberies (46.1% of robberies), and females are the most common victims of assault (41.7% of assaults) and rapes (97.9% of rapes).

Hispanic victims. In contrast to the 10 percent difference in clearance found for cases involving Hispanic (30%) and non-Hispanic (40%) victims, refusal rates of cases involving only Hispanic victims and non-Hispanic victims are comparable (58.8% and 60.4%, respectively).

Most complaints in the case refusal sample involve Black victims (68.8% of cases involving known victim race). Of the 38.4 percent of cases involving Black victims that were cleared, 33.1 percent were prosecuted. The majority of cases involving White victims (52.3%) and Black and White victims (66.7%) were accepted for prosecution. This suggests that Black victims are largely neglected by police and prosecutors at beginning stages of the criminal justice process.

The victim racial makeup for various crime types in the revised sample (see Table 10) generally align with those in the original sample (see Table 8), though differences in the overall proportion of cases prosecuted for victims of different races are larger for case refusal than clearance [55] Case refusal for Black victims appears to be particularly high for robbery and assault cases, and low for robberies and assaults involving Black and White victims. In contrast to the victim devaluation hypothesis, case refusals are higher for White victims for the crimes of homicide and rape, though the numbers of homicide and rape complaints involving White victims are smaller than those involving Black victims.

[55] Data for the variable were missing in a higher proportion of robbery complaints than in the original sample ($n$ = 24, or 7.2% of robbery cases compared to the 53, or 3.4%, of robbery cases), and were comparable to the original sample for the crime of assault ($n$ = 3, or 0.3% of assaults compared to the original $n$ = 14; 0.6% of assault cases).

**Table 10. Victim Race by Crime Type for Case Refusal Sample (*N* = 1,438)**

| | Homicide | | Assault | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Victim Race** | **N(%)** | **N (%) Refused** | **N(%)** | **N (%) Refused** |
| Black victim(s) | 53 (86.9%) | 15 (28.3%) | 710 (71.4%) | 498 (70.1%) |
| White victim(s) | 6 (9.8%) | 4 (66.7%) | 224 (22.5%) | 109 (48.7%) |
| Black and White victims | 2 (3.3%) | 1 (50.0%) | 58 (5.8%) | 20 (34.5%) |
| *Missing victim race* | 0 (0.0%) | N/A | 3 (0.3%) | 1 (33.3%) |
| | **Robbery** | | **Rape** | |
| | **N(%)** | **N (%) Refused** | **N(%)** | **N (%) Refused** |
| Black victim(s) | 178 (53.3%) | 118 (66.3%) | 29 (60.4%) | 18 (62.1%) |
| White victim(s) | 114 (34.1%) | 46 (40.4%) | 19 (39.6%) | 14 (73.7%) |
| Black and White victims | 18 (5.4%) | 5 (27.8%) | 0 (0.0%) | N/A |
| *Missing victim race* | 24 (7.2%) | 8 (33.3%) | 0 (0.0%) | N/A |

## 5.3 SUSPECT CHARACTERISTICS

### 5.3.1 CLEARANCE SAMPLE

Table 11 describes suspect characteristics for the clearance sample. Most suspects in the clearance sample are Black (89.4% of cases in which suspect race is known) and male (80.9% of cases in which suspect sex is known). Males are more likely than females (on their own and in combination with males) to be suspects of all types of crime. The combined average age of suspects in a complaint is younger than that of victims, at 28.6 years of age (*SD* = 10.5).[56] Less than one percent of cases involve Hispanic suspects, compared to the 61.4% percent of cases recorded by the police as involving only non-Hispanic suspects. Complaints involving male suspects are less likely to be cleared compared to cases involving female suspects and suspects of both sexes, and cases

[56] Nearly half (46.8%) of complaints involve suspects from the 18-29 age category. Suspects were divided into 12 and under, 13-17, 18-29, and 30-59, 60+, multiple suspect ages, and unknown suspect age categories.

involving multiple suspect age categories have higher likelihoods of clearance than complaints involving similarly-aged suspects.

**Table 11. Suspect Characteristics and Clearance (*N* = 4,158)**

| Variable Category | Variable Name | N (%) | N (%) Cleared | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sex | All male suspect(s) | 2,699 (64.9%) | 1,228 (45.5%) | | |
| | All female suspect(s) | 410 (9.9%) | 274 (66.8%) | | |
| | Male and female suspects | 228 (5.5%) | 138 (60.5%) | | |
| | *Missing/unknown suspect sex* | 821 (19.7%) | 3 (0.4%) | | |
| Race | All Black suspect(s) | 2,970 (71.4%) | 1,401 (47.2%) | | |
| | All White suspect(s) | 316 (7.6%) | 215 (68.0%) | | |
| | Black and White suspects | 38 (0.9%) | 23 (60.5%) | | |
| | *Missing/unknown suspect race* | 834 (20.1%) | 4 (0.5%) | | |
| Ethnicity | All Hispanic suspect(s) | 27 (0.6%) | 16 (59.3%) | | |
| | All non-Hispanic suspect(s) | 2,552 (61.4%) | 1,579 (61.9%) | | |
| | *Missing/unknown suspect ethnicity* | 1,579 (38.0%) | 48 (3.0%) | | |
| Age | Average age | 3,134 (75.4%) | | 28.6 | 10.5 |
| | Suspect(s) of one age category | 2,895 (69.6%) | 1,489 (51.4%) | | |
| | Suspects of multiple ages | 239 (5.8%) | 149 (58.2%) | | |
| | *Missing/unknown suspect age* | 1,024 (24.6%) | 5 (0.5%) | | |

Table 12 presents clearance complaint data by suspect race and crime type. Black individuals account for especially high proportions of homicide (94.2%), assault (86.6%), robbery (93.8%), and rape (75%) suspects for cases in which suspect race is known. Although White suspects are involved in about nine and 23 percent of total assault and rape cases, respectively, they account for less than five percent of homicide and robbery suspects. For each crime type, Black and White suspects account for the smallest proportion of cases, with zero rapes involving this suspect race category. It is important to note that suspect race is missing for about half of homicide complaints, and nearly a quarter of assaults.

**Table 12. Suspect Race by Crime Type for Clearance Sample (*N* = 4,158)**

| | Homicide | | Assault | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Victim Race** | **N(%)** | **N (%) Cleared** | **N(%)** | **N (%) Cleared** |
| Black suspect(s) | 81 (46.8%) | 72 (88.9%) | 1,518 (65.9%) | 914 (60.2%) |
| White suspect(s) | 3 (1.7%) | 3 (100.0%) | 216 (9.4%) | 157 (72.7%) |
| Black and White suspects | 2 (1.2%) | 2 (100.0%) | 18 (0.8%) | 13 (72.2%) |
| *Missing suspect race* | 87 (50.3%) | 0 (0.0%) | 552 (24.0%) | 2 (0.4%) |
| | **Robbery** | | **Rape** | |
| | **N(%)** | **N (%) Cleared** | **N(%)** | **N (%) Cleared** |
| Black suspect(s) | 1,281 (82.5%) | 372 (29.0%) | 90 (70.3%) | 43 (47.8%) |
| White suspect(s) | 67 (4.3%) | 38 (56.7%) | 30 (23.4%) | 17 (56.7%) |
| Black and White suspects | 18 (1.2%) | 8 (44.4%) | 0 (0.0%) | N/A |
| *Missing suspect race* | 187 (12.0%) | 2 (1.1%) | 8 (6.3%) | 0 (0.0%) |

As was noted previously, most clearance studies do not examine offender information because knowledge about suspects is likely to lead to clearance and arrestee data are often recorded post-clearance. As is to be expected, then, clearance levels for cases involving suspect information are high, and when suspect race is missing, clearance is low. Approximately 47.2 percent of cases involving Black suspects are cleared, compared to 60.5 percent of complaints involving Black and White suspects and 68 percent of cases involving only White suspects. Less than one percent of cases of the cases missing offender race information were recorded as cleared.

### 5.3.2 CASE REFUSAL SAMPLE

Table 13 presents suspect descriptive data for violent crime complaints that reach the prosecutor's office. Most suspects are Black (84.9%) and male (73.8%), with males being more likely than females (on their own and in combination with males) to be suspects of all types of crime. Less than one percent of cases involve Hispanic suspects, but the majority of cases involving them are accepted for prosecution (75%) compared to

the 40 percent of cases involving non-Hispanic suspects that are. The combined average age of suspects in a complaint remains younger than that of victims, at 30.7 years of age (*SD* = 10.8), but older than the average age of suspects in the original clearance dataset.

**Table 13. Suspect Characteristics and Case Refusal (*N* = 1,438)**

| Variable Category | Variable Name | N (%) | N (%) Refused | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sex | All male suspect(s) | 1,061 (73.8%) | 597 (56.3%) | | |
| | All female suspect(s) | 251 (17.5%) | 178 (70.9%) | | |
| | Male and female suspects | 126 (8.8%) | 82 (65.1%) | | |
| Race | All Black suspect(s) | 1,221 (84.9%) | 736 (60.3%) | | |
| | All White suspect(s) | 196 (13.6%) | 109 (55.6%) | | |
| | Black and White suspects | 21 (01.5%) | 12 (57.1%) | | |
| Ethnicity | All Hispanic suspect(s) | 12 (0.8%) | 3 (25.0%) | | |
| | All non-Hispanic suspect(s) | 1,391(96.7%) | 835 (60.0%) | | |
| | *Missing/unknown suspect ethnicity* | 35 (2.4%) | 19 (54.3%) | | |
| Age | Average age | 1,437 (99.9%) | | 30.7 | 10.8 |
| | Suspect(s) of one age category | 1,307 (90.9%) | 787 (60.2%) | | |
| | Suspects of multiple ages | 130 (9.0%) | 76 (58.5%) | | |
| | *Missing/unknown suspect age* | 1 (0.1%) | 0 (0.0%) | | |

Table 14, which presents descriptive information for offender race and crime type, demonstrates stark racial differences by crime type. Black suspects make up particularly large proportions of homicides, assaults, robberies, and rapes. Cases involving White suspects and suspects who are Black and White have lower case refusals compared to cases involving Black suspects, suggesting that Black suspects may not experience disproportionately punitive treatment at the case screening stage.

**Table 14. Suspect Race by Crime Type for Case Refusal Sample (*N* = 1,438)**

| | Homicide | | Assault | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Victim Race** | **N(%)** | **N (%) Refused** | **N(%)** | **N (%) Refused** |
| Black suspect(s) | 58 (95.1%) | 19 (32.8%) | 835 (83.9%) | 540 (64.7%) |
| White suspect(s) | 1 (1.6%) | 1 (100.0%) | 148 (14.9%) | 81 (54.7%) |
| Black and White suspects | 2 (3.3%) | 0 (0.0%) | 12 (1.2%) | 7 (58.3%) |
| | **Robbery** | | **Rape** | |
| | **N(%)** | **N (%) Refused** | **N(%)** | **N (%) Refused** |
| Black suspect(s) | 295 (88.3%) | 157 (53.2%) | 33 (68.8%) | 20 (60.6%) |
| White suspect(s) | 32 (9.6%) | 15 (46.9%) | 15 (31.2%) | 12 (80.0%) |
| Black and White suspects | 7 (2.1%) | 5 (71.4%) | 0 (0.0%) | N/A |

## 5.4 VICTIM-SUSPECT RACIAL DYADS

### 5.4.1 CLEARANCE SAMPLE

Table 15 displays victim-suspect racial dyad information for cases in which dyad information is known. Over half of the total sample involves Black victim(s) and suspect(s), followed by cases involving White victim(s) and Black suspect(s). Few cases involve Black and White victims and Black and White suspects, Black and White victims and White suspect(s), and Black or White victim(s) and Black and White suspects. It is important to note that dyad information is missing for 894 cases (21.5% of the total sample; not shown).

**Table 15. Victim-Suspect Racial Dyad Information for Clearance Sample (N, %)**

| | | **Suspect Race** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | *Black* | *White* | *Black and White* |
| **Victim Race** | *Black* | 2,123 (51.1%) | 47 (1.1%) | 11 (0.3%) |
| | *White* | 667 (16.0%) | 250 (6.0%) | 15 (0.4%) |
| | *Black and White* | 129 (3.1%) | 10 (0.2%) | 12 (0.3%) |

In looking at victim race alone, cases involving Black victims appear to have similar clearance likelihoods in comparison to other cases, and cases involving Black suspects have lower clearance likelihoods when looking solely at suspect race. But when looking at victim-suspect racial dyads, relationships become more complex. Table 16 shows clearance information for the cases in which victim-suspect racial dyad were available. Of the complaints that are missing racial dyad information, 4.1 percent are cleared ($n$ = 37).

**Table 16. Clearance by Victim-Suspect Racial Dyad (N, %)**

| | | **Suspect Race** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | *Black* | *White* | *Black and White* |
| **Victim Race** | *Black* | 1,053 (49.6%) | 27 (57.5%) | 5 (45.5%) |
| | *White* | 251 (37.6%) | 172 (68.8%) | 8 (53.3%) |
| | *Black and White* | 73 (56.6%) | 7 (70.0%) | 10 (83.3%) |

Donald Black's behavior of law theory (1976) expects cases involving Black suspects and White victims to be most likely to be cleared, followed by cases involving White suspects and victims and cases involving Black suspects and victims. Cases involving White suspects and Black victims, according to the theory, will be least likely to be prioritized, as White suspects are provided impunity and Black victims do not enjoy legal protection.

In line with Black's theory, cases involving White victims and suspects or a combination of Black and White victims and suspects appear to be significantly more likely to be cleared than cases involving Black victims and suspects (68.8% of cases

cleared and 83.3% of cases cleared, respectively). In stark contrast to Black's expectation that cases with Black suspects and White victims will be *most* likely to be cleared, cases involving this racial breakdown appear *least* likely to be cleared (37.6%). Further, cases involving Black suspects and victims, which are expected to be relatively unlikely to be cleared, are found to have *higher* clearance levels (49.6%) than cases involving Black suspects and White victims. Finally, behavior of law theory expects cases involving Black victims and suspects to be more likely to be cleared than those committed by White suspects against Black victims. But in the current study, cases involving Black victims and suspects have clearance rates that are about eight percent *lower* than cases involving White suspects and Black victims (57.5%).

### 5.4.2 CASE REFUSAL SAMPLE

Table 17 displays victim-suspect racial dyad information. Racial dyad information remains largely consistent with the clearance sample, with the exception of a larger proportion of the revised sample (65.4%) involving Black victim(s) and suspect(s), suggesting that cases involving this victim-suspect racial dyad may be likely to make it to the courts. About two percent of the sample ($n$ = 27 complaints) is missing racial dyad information (not shown).

**Table 17. Victim-Suspect Racial Dyad Descriptive Information (N, %)**

| | | **Suspect Race** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | *Black* | *White* | *Black and White* |
| **Victim Race** | *Black* | 941 (65.4%) | 24 (1.7%) | 5 (0.4%) |
| | *White* | 199 (13.8%) | 157 (10.9%) | 7 (0.5%) |
| | *Black and White* | 62 (4.3%) | 7 (0.5%) | 9 (0.6%) |

When examining victim race on its own, it appears that cases involving Black victims have higher case refusal likelihoods in comparison to victims of other race categories, and when looking solely at suspect race, cases involving White suspects appear to have particularly low case refusal likelihoods. But, as was the case in the clearance sample, relationships become more complex when victim-suspect racial dyads are examined (see Table 18 below). Note that about 33.3 percent of the 27 complaints that are missing racial dyad information ($n$ = 9) are accepted for prosecution (not shown).

**Table 18. Victim-Suspect Racial Dyad Information for Case Refusal Sample (N, %)**

| | | **Suspect Race** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | *Black* | *White* | *Black and White* |
| **Victim Race** | *Black* | 630 (67.0%) | 14 (58.3%) | 5 (100.0%) |
| | *White* | 80 (40.2%) | 91 (58.0%) | 2 (28.6%) |
| | *Black and White* | 19 (30.7%) | 2 (28.6%) | 5 (55.6%) |

A number of findings align with Black's behavior of law theory. Although the differences are small, cases involving White victims and suspects or a combination of Black and White victims and suspects appear to be more likely to be prosecuted than cases involving Black victims and suspects. Additionally, and in line with Black's expectation that cases with Black suspects and White victims will have *high* prosecution likelihoods (but in contrast to his idea that they will have the highest), cases involving

this racial breakdown have low refusal rates (40.2%). Cases involving Black suspects and victims, which are expected to be relatively unlikely to be prosecuted, are found to have much higher levels of refusal than cases involving Black suspects and White victims (67.0% refusal versus 40.2% refusal, respectively). In contrast to Black's theory, which expects cases involving Black victims and suspects to be more likely to be prosecuted than those committed by White suspects against Black victims, cases involving Black victims and suspects have *refusal* rates that are about 10 percent higher than those committed by White suspects against Black victims.

## 5.5 ADDITIONAL COMPLAINT CHARACTERISTICS

### 5.5.1 WEAPONS

*Clearance Sample*

Most complaints involve weapons of some kind, with firearms being the most common weapon (present in almost 57% of all complaints). About half of assaults (50.5%) involve firearms, compared to 96.5 percent of homicides, and 65.5 percent of robberies, and 5.5 percent of rape complaints. Knives are present in 12.5 percent of assault complaints, and personal weapons, such as hands, feet, and teeth, are involved in 54.7 percent of rapes, 23.4 percent of robberies, and 21.9 percent of assaults.[57] Approximately 15.2 percent of complaints involve multiple weapons, and about 4.6 involve multiple weapon type combinations. As is to be expected, complaints involving

[57] Knives are present in 4.7 percent of rapes, 3.5 percent of robberies, 1.9 percent of weapons offenses, and 1.2 percent of homicides. Personal weapons are involved in less than one percent of weapons offenses and 1.2 percent of homicides.

gun usage and unknown weapon types appear to have low clearance likelihoods (27.4% and 24.4%, respectively).

**Table 19. Weapon and Clearance Summary Statistics**

| Weapon Type | N (%) | N (%) Cleared |
|---|---|---|
| Only gun | 2,268 (54.5%) | 621 (27.4%) |
| Only knife | 297 (7.1%) | 185 (62.3%) |
| Only personal weapon | 789 (19.0%) | 396 (50.2%) |
| Only unknown weapon | 82 (2.0%) | 20 (24.4%) |
| Only other weapon | 426 (10.3%) | 237 (55.6%) |
| Multiple weapon types | 192 (4.6%) | 140 (72.9%) |
| No weapon | 104 (2.5%) | 44 (42.3%) |

*Case Refusal Sample*

Weapon types in the case refusal sample (Table 20) remain similar to those found in the clearance sample. Firearms are still the most common weapon (present in about 41.2% of all complaints). About 34.5 percent of assaults involve firearms, and most homicides (95.1%) and robberies (56.3%) involve them. A little over six percent of rape complaints involve firearms. Knives are present in 19.1 percent of assault complaints, and less than five percent of other crime complaint types. Personal weapons, such as hands, feet, and teeth, are involved in 58.3 percent of rapes, and around 30 percent of robberies and assaults.[58] Approximately 26.2 percent of complaints involve multiple weapons, and nine percent involve multiple weapon type combinations. In contrast to expectations, complaints involving gun usage appear to have low refusal likelihoods compared to complaints involving other weapon types. It may be that firearm crimes are

[58] Knives are present in 4.2 percent of rapes, 4.8 percent of robberies, and 1.6 percent of homicides. Personal weapons are involved in 1.6 percent of homicides.

perceived as serious by prosecutors, and/or firearm-related offenses that make it to this case processing stage may be more likely than others to involve reliable physical evidence.

**Table 20. Weapon and Case Refusal Summary Statistics**

| Weapon Type | N (%) | N (%) Refused |
|---|---|---|
| Only gun | 535 (37.2%) | 275 (51.4%) |
| Only knife | 173 (12.0%) | 122 (70.5%) |
| Only personal weapon | 337 (23.4%) | 214 (63.5%) |
| Only unknown weapon | 17 (1.2%) | 12 (70.6%) |
| Only other weapon | 214 (14.9%) | 140 (65.4%) |
| Multiple weapon types | 130 (9.0%) | 78 (60.0%) |
| No weapon | 32 (2.2%) | 16 (50.0%) |

### 5.5.2 VICTIM-SUSPECT RELATIONSHIP

*Clearance Sample*

Stranger and outside of family relationships are the most common victim-suspect relationship types, and complaints coded as involving other, within family, and unknown relationships are the least common. In line with prior research, a large proportion of complaints (27%) are missing victim-suspect relationship data Victim-suspect relationships appear to be important for clearance. As can be seen in Table 21, cases involving stranger and unknown relationships are the least likely to be cleared, while the majority of cases involving within family, outside of family, and not applicable relationship types are cleared. Complaints with missing victim-suspect relationship data are particularly unlikely to be cleared.

Victim-suspect relationships vary by crime type (see Table 22). In cases involving known victim-suspect relationship information, outside of family relationships are the most common relationship types found in homicides, followed by multiple relationship

types. A large majority of cases with known victim-suspect relationships are cleared. All cases involving within family relationships and not applicable relationships are cleared.

**Table 21. Victim-Suspect Relationship and Clearance Summary Statistics**

| **Relationship Type** | **N (%)** | **N (%) Cleared** |
|---|---|---|
| Within family | 189 (4.6%) | 148 (78.3%) |
| Outside of family | 1,073 (25.8%) | 802 (74.6%) |
| Stranger | 1,206 (29.0%) | 333 (27.6%) |
| Relationship unknown | 191 (4.6%) | 32 (16.8%) |
| Not applicable | 133 (3.2%) | 86 (64.7%) |
| Other | 9 (0.2%) | 4 (44.4%) |
| Multiple relationship types | 236 (5.7%) | 134 (56.8%) |
| *Missing V-S relationship* | 1,121 (27.0%) | 104 (9.3%) |

**Table 22. Victim-Suspect Relationship by Crime Type for Clearance Sample**

| | **Homicide** | | **Assault** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Relationship Type** | **N(%)** | **N (%) Cleared** | **N(%)** | **N (%) Cleared** |
| Within family | 4 (2.3%) | 4 (100.0%) | 171 (7.4%) | 131 (76.6%) |
| Outside of family | 44 (25.4%) | 41 (93.2%) | 834 (36.2%) | 631(75.7%) |
| Stranger | 5 (2.9%) | 5 (100.0%) | 345 (15.0%) | 126 (36.5%) |
| Relationship unknown | 9 (5.2%) | 8 (88.9%) | 97 (4.2%) | 17 (17.5%) |
| Not applicable | 2 (1.2%) | 2 (100.0%) | 76 (3.3%) | 57 (75.0%) |
| Other | 1 (0.6%) | 0 (0.0%) | 8 (0.4%) | 4 (50.0%) |
| Multiple relationship types | 18 (10.4%) | 14 (77.8%) | 125 (5.4%) | 73 (58.4%) |
| *Missing V-S relationship* | 90 (52.0%) | 3 (3.3%) | 648 (28.1%) | 43 (7.3%) |
| | **Robbery** | | **Rape** | |
| | **N(%)** | **N (%) Cleared** | **N(%)** | **N (%) Cleared** |
| Within family | 2 (0.1%) | 2 (100.0%) | 12 (9.4%) | 11 (91.7%) |
| Outside of family | 138 (8.9%) | 98 (71.0%) | 57 (44.5%) | 32 (56.1%) |
| Stranger | 834 (53.7%) | 195 (23.4%) | 22 (17.2%) | 7 (31.8%) |
| Relationship unknown | 82 (5.3%) | 6 (7.3%) | 3 (2.3%) | 1 (33.3%) |
| Not applicable | 54 (3.5%) | 27 (50.0%) | 1 (0.8%) | 0 (0.0%) |
| Other | 0 (0.0%) | N/A | 0 (0.0%) | N/A |
| Multiple relationship types | 89 (5.7%) | 44 (49.4%) | 4 (3.1%) | 3 (75.0%) |
| *Missing V-S relationship* | 354 (22.8%) | 48 (13.6%) | 29 (22.7%) | 6 (20.7%) |

In contrast to the literature (e.g., Lee, 2005), large proportions of homicides involving strangers and unknown relationships are cleared. The lower clearance rate for the multiple relationship types category makes sense, as relationships can involve strangers and unknown relationships in addition to relationship types with clearance rates that are typically high. Notably, and in contrast to typical studies of clearance (Taylor et al., 2009), homicide cases are particularly likely to have missing victim-suspect relationships. Over half of homicides are missing this information, and only three cases with missing victim-suspect relationships are cleared (3.3% clearance rate), suggesting that clearance may depend on this information.

Victim-suspect relationship makeups are similar for assaults and rapes. Both crime types are most likely to involve outside of family relationships, and the proportions of cases involving stranger and within family relationships are similar for both crime types. Like in homicide cases, assaults and rapes involving within family and outside of family relationships have high clearance. Assaults with not applicable relationships and rapes that involve multiple relationship types also have high clearance levels. It is worth noting that missing victim-suspect relationships are more common in assault cases (28.1%) than in rape cases (22.7%). Clearance of assault cases with missing relationship data is low (7.3%) compared to that of rapes (20.7%).

Over half of robbery complaints involve stranger relationships, with each of the other relationships categories accounting for less than 10 percent of robberies. It is worth noting that all six cases involving within family relationship cases were cleared, and a high proportion of robberies involving outside of family relationships were cleared.

*Case Refusal Sample*

Table 23 contains information about victim-suspect relationship and case refusal. As was the case in the original sample, stranger and outside of family relationships are the most common victim-suspect relationship types, and complaints coded as involving other and unknown relationships are the least common. In the original sample, over a quarter of complaints were missing victim-suspect relationship data, which makes sense as victim-suspect relationship information appears to be important for clearance. In the revised sample, which includes only cleared cases, 80 cases (5.6% of the total sample) are missing these data.

**Table 23. Victim-Suspect Relationship and Case Refusal Summary Statistics**

| **Relationship Type** | **N (%)** | **N (%) Refused** |
|---|---|---|
| Within family | 130 (9.0%) | 88 (67.7%) |
| Outside of family | 727 (50.6%) | 507 (69.7%) |
| Stranger | 270 (18.8%) | 121 (44.8%) |
| Relationship unknown | 29 (2.0%) | 18 (62.1%) |
| Not applicable | 78 (5.4%) | 15 (19.2%) |
| Other | 4 (0.3%) | 3 (75.0%) |
| Multiple relationship types | 120 (8.3%) | 70 (57.9%) |
| *Missing V-S relationship* | 80 (5.6%) | 35 (43.8%) |

In the original sample, cases involving other and unknown relationships were the least likely to be cleared, and cases involving within family, outside of family, and not applicable relationship types were the most likely to be cleared. In line with recent research on sexual assault prosecution (Spohn & Tellis, 2018), different victim-suspect relationships appear to be important for prosecution. Some cases that had the lowest and

highest likelihoods of clearance have the *highest* and *lowest* likelihoods of prosecution. While cases involving other and unknown relationship types remain unlikely to be treated punitively, cases involving not applicable relationships are found at this stage to be more likely to be prosecuted than those involving within family and outside of family relationships. These results suggest that certain relationships may increase crime clearance but later inhibit prosecution. It may be that cases involving persons who are known to one another are easier to clear, but are not seriously pursued by victims and/or prosecutors post-police processing.

Victim-suspect relationships vary by crime type in the revised sample (see Table 24). In homicide complaints, outside of family relationships remain a common victim-suspect relationship, with over half of homicides involving them (compared to 25.4% of homicides in the original sample). Larger proportions of homicide complaints in the revised sample include stranger relationships (8.2% of total homicides, in comparison to 2.9% of the original homicide sample) and multiple relationship types (18.0% of total homicides, compared to 10.4% of the original homicide sample). As was the case for clearance and in line with expectations, cases involving multiple relationship types and ones involving outside of family relationships have relatively high prosecution levels. In contrast to clearance findings, but in line with hypotheses, homicides involving stranger and unknown victim suspect relationships have high refusal rates. It is important to note that in the original sample, over half of homicides were missing victim-suspect information, and only three cases with missing victim-suspect relationships were cleared. Only two homicides that were missing victim-suspect information were retained in the sample, and both were prosecuted.

**Table 24. Victim-Suspect Relationship by Crime Type for Case Refusal Sample**

| | Homicide | | Assault | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Relationship Type** | **N(%)** | **N (%) Refused** | **N(%)** | **N (%) Refused** |
| Within family | 2 (3.3%) | 1 (50.0%) | 120 (12.1%) | 84 (70.0%) |
| Outside of family | 33 (54.1%) | 9 (27.3%) | 578 (58.1%) | 408 (70.6%) |
| Stranger | 5 (8.2%) | 3 (60.0%) | 116 (11.7%) | 47 (40.5%) |
| Relationship unknown | 7 (11.5%) | 5 (71.4%) | 16 (1.6%) | 9 (56.3%) |
| Not applicable | 1 (1.6%) | 0 (0.0%) | 54 (5.4%) | 11 (20.4%) |
| Other | 0 (0.0%) | N/A | 4 (0.4%) | 3 (75.0%) |
| Multiple relationship types | 11 (18.0%) | 2 (18.2%) | 69 (6.9%) | 48 (69.6%) |
| *Missing V-S relationship* | 2 (3.3%) | 0 (0.0%) | 38 (3.8%) | 18 (47.4%) |
| | **Robbery** | | **Rape** | |
| | **N(%)** | **N (%) Refused** | **N(%)** | **N (%) Refused** |
| Within family | 2 (0.6%) | 2 (100.0%) | 6 (12.5%) | 1 (16.7%) |
| Outside of family | 89 (26.7%) | 68 (76.4%) | 27 (56.3%) | 22 (81.5%) |
| Stranger | 142 (42.5%) | 67 (47.2%) | 7 (14.6%) | 4 (57.1%) |
| Relationship unknown | 5 (1.5%) | 4 (80.0%) | 1 (2.1%) | 0 (0.0%) |
| Not applicable | 23 (6.9%) | 4 (17.4%) | 0 (0.0%) | N/A |
| Other | 0 (0.0%) | N/A | 0 (0.0%) | N/A |
| Multiple relationship types | 38 (12.1%) | 19 (50.0%) | 2 (4.2%) | 1 (50.0%) |
| *Missing V-S relationship* | 35 (3.6%) | 13 (37.1%) | 5 (10.4%) | 4 (80.0%) |

The victim-suspect relationship makeups for assaults and rapes remain similar. Both crime types are most likely to involve outside of family relationships. It is worth noting that these proportions are higher than those in the original sample, in which about 36.2 percent of assaults and 44.5 percent of rapes involved this relationship. The proportions of cases involving other relationship types remain similar for assaults and rapes at this stage of case processing.

Refusal proportions for assaults differ by victim-suspect relationship. In contrast to homicides, assaults involving strangers are found to have low refusal levels (40.5%),

and assaults involving multiple relationship types, within family relationships, and outside of family relationships have refusal levels of about 70 percent. These findings suggest that personal relationships may matter for the prosecution of assaults. The proportion of clearance for assaults involving not applicable cases was high (75%). Prosecution likelihood for this category is also high, with about 80 percent of retained cases being accepted.

Most rapes involving strangers are refused (57.1%), and in contrast to other crime types, over 80 percent of rapes involving within family relationships are prosecuted. However, clearance for rapes involving within family relationships cases was quite high (91.7%), and only six of 11 cleared cases were retained from the original sample, suggesting perhaps that five were dropped by victims or police before entering the prosecutor's office. Like assault complaints, rapes involving outside of family relationships have high refusal levels, with 81.5% of these cases being rejected for prosecution. Again, however, clearance for this relationship type was relatively high (56.1%), and only 27 of the 32 cleared cases made it to the CAO record system. The prosecution of rape cases with missing relationship data is low, with four of five cases (80%) being rejected for prosecution.

The most common victim-suspect relationship type found in robbery complaints are stranger ones (42.5%), followed by cases involving outside of family relationships (26.7%).[59-60] Most robberies involving within and outside of family relationship cases

[59] It is worth noting that outside of family relationships were present in 147, or 9.5 percent, of the original sample of robberies.
[60] Twelve of the 303 cases that were missing victim-suspect relationship data in the original sample were retained in the revised sample, making up 3.6 percent of the revised sample as opposed to almost 20 percent of the original sample.

were cleared, but rejected by prosecutors. Less than 14 percent of the original 354 robberies with missing relationship data were cleared, but most that were retained in the case refusal sample (about 63%) were prosecuted.

### 5.5.3 WITNESSES

*Clearance Sample*

Less than 10 percent of complaints in the clearance sample involve witnesses other than the victim (see Table 25). Witnesses are present in 49.1 percent of homicide cases, and in about 12, five, and four percent of rape, assault, and robbery complaints, respectively. In contrast to expectations, clearance levels for complaints that do and do not involve witnesses are similar.

**Table 25. Witness and Clearance Summary Statistics**

| Variable | N (%) | N (%) Cleared |
|---|---|---|
| Witness(es) | 272 (6.5%) | 107 (39.3%) |
| No witness(es) | 3,886 (93.5%) | 1,536 (39.5%) |

*Case Refusal Sample*

As can be seen in Table 26, a small percentage of complaints in the case refusal sample involve witnesses. Witnesses are present in 44.3 percent of homicides, 15 percent of rapes, and about four percent of assaults and robberies. In line with the justice system action hypothesis, cases with witnesses have lower refusal likelihoods than cases without witnesses, but these differences appear to be small.

**Table 26. Witness and Case Refusal Summary Statistics**

| Variable | N (%) | N (%) Refused |
|---|---|---|

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Witness(es) | 89 (6.2%) | 51 (57.3%) |
| No witness(es) | 1,349 (93.8%) | 806 (59.8%) |

### 5.5.4 OTHER COMPLAINT-LEVEL CONTROLS

*Clearance Sample*

Table 27 describes additional complaint-level control variables in relation to clearance. Crimes are most likely to occur during the second shift and on weekdays, to be completed (as opposed to attempted), to not involve known victim injuries, and to be committed outside of the home. Nearly half of complaints that occur during the first shift (48.3%) are cleared, compared to those that occur during the second (37.6%) and third (34%) shifts. Cases involving minor, major, or multiple injuries have higher clearance rates (45.5%) than crimes involving no or unknown injuries (32.8%).[61] A much higher percentage of domestic complaints than non-domestic complaints are cleared (84.5% compared to 31.2%).

**Table 27. Complaint-Level Control Variable and Clearance Summary Statistics**

| Variable Category | Variable Name | N (%) | N (%) Cleared |
|---|---|---|---|
| Victim injury | Minor injury | 1,175 (28.3%) | 577 (49.1%) |
| | Major injury | 741 (17.8%) | 290 (39.1%) |
| | No/unknown injury | 1,960 (47.1%) | 643 (32.8%) |
| | Multiple injury types | 72 (1.7%) | 38 (52.8%) |
| | *Missing/unknown victim injury* | 210 (5.1%) | 95 (45.2%) |
| Time of day | First shift | 1,101 (26.5%) | 532 (48.3%) |
| | Second shift | 2,009 (48.3%) | 755 (37.6%) |
| | Third shift | 1,048 (25.2%) | 356 (34.0%) |

[61] Assaults (65.6%, or 1,490 of 2,273) are more likely than robberies (27.4%, or 409 of 1,492), and rapes (26%, or 33 of 127) to involve known injuries.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Day of week | Weekday | 2,894 (69.6%) | 1,174 (40.6%) |
| | Weekend | 1,264 (30.4%) | 469 (37.1%) |
| Completion status | Attempted | 167 (4.0%) | 40 (24.0%) |
| | Completed | 3,991 (96.0%) | 1,603 (40.2%) |
| Domestic flag | Domestic | 650 (15.6%) | 549 (84.5%) |
| | Not domestic | 3,508 (84.4%) | 1,094 (31.2%) |

*Case Refusal Sample*

Table 28 describes additional control variables for the case refusal sample. Most descriptives are in line with the original sample, though a substantially smaller proportion of the revised sample involves domestic incidents (64.9% compared to the original 84.4%), suggesting perhaps that cases that occur in the home are likely to be cleared but not pursued by prosecutors.

**Table 28. Complaint-Level Control Variable and Case Refusal Summary Statistics**

| Variable Category | Variable Name | N (%) | N (%) Refused |
|---|---|---|---|
| Victim injury | Minor injury | 515 (37.9%) | 360 (69.9%) |
| | Major injury | 272 (20.0%) | 146 (53.7%) |
| | No/unknown injury | 616 (42.8%) | 336 (54.5%) |
| | Multiple injury types | 35 (2.4%) | 15 (42.9%) |
| Time of day | First shift | 459 (31.9%) | 265 (57.7%) |
| | Second shift | 656 (45.6%) | 387 (59.0%) |
| | Third shift | 323 (22.5%) | 205 (63.5%) |
| Day of week | Weekday | 1,026 (71.4%) | 603 (58.8%) |
| | Weekend | 412 (28.7%) | 254 (61.7%) |
| Completion status | Attempted | 28 (2.0) | 12 (42.9%) |
| | Completed | 1,410 (98.1%) | 845 (59.9%) |
| Domestic flag | Domestic | 505 (35.1%) | 368 (72.9%) |
| | Not domestic | 933 (64.9%) | 489 (52.4%) |

Over half of complaints that occur during the first shift (57.7%) are refused, compared to those that occur during the second (59.0%) and third (63.5%) shifts. Cases involving minor, major, or multiple injuries have higher refusal rates (63.4%) than crimes involving no or unknown injuries (54.5% refused).[62] Although a higher percentage of domestic complaints (84.5%) than non-domestic complaints (31.2%) were cleared, a higher percentage of domestic (72.9%) than non-domestic (52.4%) cases were refused for prosecution. Again, this suggests that certain crimes may be taken seriously by the police but not pursued by victims or prosecutors.

## 5.6 NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTERISTICS

### 5.6.1 CLEARANCE SAMPLE

In the current study, neighborhoods are defined as block groups. Descriptive information for the St. Louis neighborhoods that make up the clearance sample are provided in Table 29. St. Louis block groups experienced an average of about 21.2 crimes (*SD* = 12) during 2015, with over 50 percent of block groups experiencing less than 20 crimes. Compared to the city, which is 46.9 percent Black (U.S. Census, 2018), block groups in the sample are on average about 68.9 percent Black (*SD* = 31.6), and most violent crimes in the sample (57.1%) occurred in block groups with Black populations of 70 percent or more. In the city of St. Louis, about 24.2 percent of residents live in poverty (U.S. Census, 2018).

In the study sample, most crimes occurred in block groups in which 25 percent or more residents are in poverty (61.2%) and in block groups in which 25 percent or more

[62] Assaults (32.6%, or 314 of 995) are less likely than robberies (66.8%, or 223 of 334), and rapes (64.6%, or 31 of 48) to involve no or unknown injuries.

residents live in female-headed households (50.5%). About 78 percent of homicides were committed in predominately Black (>70%) neighborhoods, compared to 61.8 percent of assaults, 48.3 percent of robberies, and 49.2 percent of rapes. Whereas about 36.3 percent (i.e., 861 of 2,372) of crimes that occur in predominately Black neighborhoods (>70%) are cleared, about 47.8 percent (i.e., 329 of 688) of crimes that occur in predominately non-Black neighborhoods (<30%) are cleared.

**Table 29. Neighborhood and Clearance Summary Statistics**

| Variable | N (%) | N (%) Cleared | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Concentrated disadvantage | | | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| Racial composition | | | 68.9 | 31.6 |
| Area population (logged) | | | 6.8 | 0.4 |
| Cross-classified | 1,446 (34.8%) | 555 (38.4%) | | |
| Not cross-classified | 2,712 (65.2%) | 1,088 (40.1%) | | |
| Number of crimes | | | 21.4 | 12.0 |

5.6.2 CASE REFUSAL SAMPLE

Table 30 describes neighborhood data for the case refusal sample. Block groups in the revised sample are on average about 66.4 percent Black (*SD* = 32.4), down from approximately 69 percent (*SD* = 31.6) in the original sample. Most violent crimes in the sample (53.5%) occurred in block groups with Black populations of 70 percent or more, and in block groups in which 25 percent or more residents are in poverty (60.3%). About 49 percent of crimes in the updated sample occurred in block groups in which 25 percent or more residents live in female-headed households.

**Table 30. Neighborhood and Case Refusal Summary Statistics**

| Variable | N (%) | N (%) Refused | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Concentrated disadvantage | | | -0.1 | 1.0 |
| Racial composition | | | 66.4 | 32.4 |
| Area population (logged) | | | 6.8 | 0.4 |
| Cross-classified | 497 (34.6%) | 290 (58.4%) | | |
| Not cross-classified | 941 (65.4%) | 567 (60.3%) | | |
| Number of crimes | | | 21.0 | 12.1 |

Proportions of crimes that were committed in predominately Black (>70%) neighborhoods are lower in the revised sample, with about 74, 56, 45, and 43 percent of homicides, assaults, robberies, and rapes occurring in neighborhoods that are predominately Black, respectively. In addition to being less likely to be cleared, crimes that occur in predominately Black neighborhoods (>70%) are more likely than crimes that occur in predominately non-Black neighborhoods (<30%) to be refused when presented to a prosecutor. About 55.2 percent (*n* = 476 of 863) of crimes that occur in predominately Black neighborhoods (>70%) are refused, compared to the 51 percent (*n* = 293 of 575) of crimes that occur in predominately non-Black neighborhoods (<30%).

## 5.7 POLICE DISTRICT CHARACTERISTICS

### 5.7.1 CLEARANCE SAMPLE

Each police district experienced between 295 and 1,030 crimes in 2015, with an average of about 832 (*SD* = 209) crimes. The average number of detectives across all districts was 10.5 (*SD* = 1.5). The number of crimes per detective ranged from 37.2 to 131.5, with an average of 107.9 crimes per detective (*SD* = 29.2). Crime and clearance vary by district (see Table 31), with 35.2 percent being the lowest percentage of crimes cleared, and 51.2 percent being the highest.

**Table 31. Police District and Clearance Summary Statistics**

| District | N (%) | N (%) Cleared |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 482 (11.6%) | 247 (51.2%) |
| 2 | 276 (6.6%) | 131 (47.5%) |
| 3 | 713 (17.2%) | 297 (41.7%) |
| 4 | 820 (19.7%) | 306 (37.3%) |
| 5 | 992 (23.9%) | 349 (35.2%) |
| 6 | 875 (21.0%) | 313 (35.8%) |

5.7.2 CASE REFUSAL SAMPLE

Districts also vary in their complaint numbers and case refusal levels, with the lowest percentage of case refusals being 54.6 percent, and 64.8 percent being the highest (see Table 32).

**Table 32. Police District and Case Refusal Summary Statistics**

| District | N (%) | N (%) Refused |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 202 (14.0%) | 115 (56.9%) |
| 2 | 113 (7.9%) | 65 (57.5%) |
| 3 | 261 (18.2%) | 169 (64.8%) |
| 4 | 264 (18.4%) | 164 (62.1%) |
| 5 | 313 (21.8%) | 171 (54.6%) |
| 6 | 285 (19.8%) | 173 (60.7%) |

5.8 DATA CHECK

To determine whether the data used in the dissertation align with official estimates, data were compared with data reported by the SLMPD (see Table 33). For each offense type, the SLMPD recorded more cases than those in the dissertation dataset. This is most likely because in order to be included in the dataset used in the dissertation, each complaint had to include demographic information for at least one known victim. Further, offenses within complaints were collapsed in the dissertation sample, meaning single complaints could include multiple crime types. For example, a complaint containing a robbery and assault would be coded as a “robbery.”

One notable finding in the dissertation is the low clearance rate of cases examined. With the exception of homicide and rape clearances trending downward from about 92 percent and 62 percent in the 1960s to approximately 65 percent and 32 percent today, clearance rates for other crime types have remained relatively stable over time (Cronin et al., 2007; FBI, 2017; Lum, Wellford, Scott, & Vovak, 2016). Lum, Wellford, Scott, and Vovak (2016) found in their study of 519 police departments with 100 or more officers that, between 1981 and 2013, assault clearance has hovered around 60 percent, and robbery clearance rates have altered between 32 and 38 percent.

**Table 33. Comparing Official Data and Clearance Sample Data**

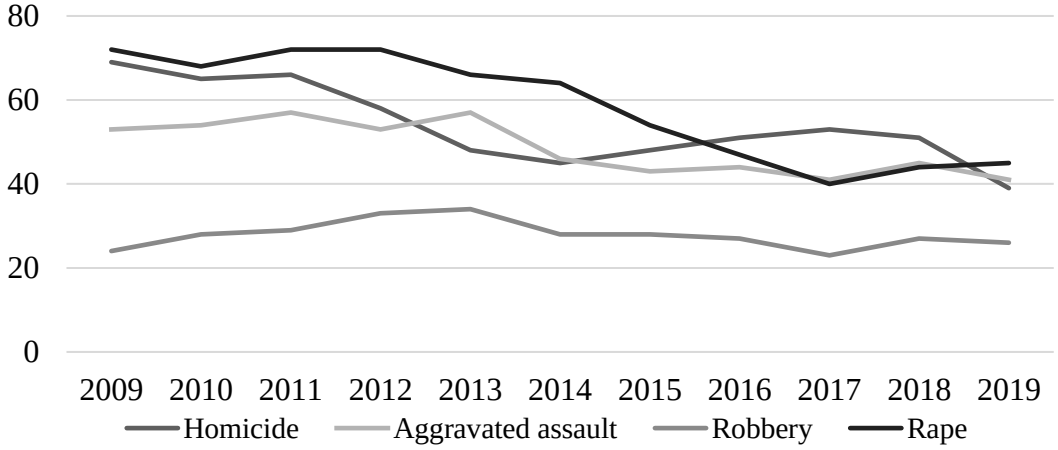
| | **SLMPD 2015** Total N(%); Cleared N(%) | | **Current Study** Total N(%); Cleared N(%) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Homicide** | 188 (3.3%) | 91 (48.4%) | 173 (4.2%) | 77 (44.5%) |
| **Rape** | 263 (4.6%) | 143 (54.4%) | 128 (3.1%) | 60 (46.9%) |
| **Robbery** | 1,790 (31.1%) | 506 (28.3%) | 1,553 (37.4%) | 420 (27.0%) |
| **Assault** | 3,522 (61.1%) | 1,500 (42.6%) | 2,304 (55.4%) | 1,086 (47.1%) |
| **Total** | 5,763 (100.0%) | 2,240 (38.9%) | 4,158 (100.0%) | 1,643 (39.5%) |

Data from the current study were compared with SLMPD data to determine whether clearance levels align. With the exception of rape clearance, which appears to be higher in St. Louis than the average city, St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department clearance for homicide, rape, and robbery are low. In 2015, SLMPD recorded a homicide clearance rate of 48.4 percent, and robbery and assault clearances of about 28 and 43 percent, respectively. Rape clearance is notably higher in the official data compared to in the dissertation, and assault clearance is lower. These discrepancies are most likely due to

the ways in which cases involving multiple incidents and persons are measured in sample complaints.

As was noted, the study year (2015) saw large increases in violence (Rosenfeld, 2016; Rosenfeld & Fox, 2019; UCR, 2015). To determine whether violent crime increases in 2015 may have affected clearance in St. Louis, comparisons were made to 2009-2019 clearance estimates. Figure 4 demonstrates clearance rates (reported counts over clearance counts) by crime type from 2009 – 2019.[63] With the exception of rape, which appears to have experienced significant declines in clearance, clearance appears to have been relatively stable during recent years. 2015 clearance rates appear to be lower than average rates for all crime types. The 2015 clearance rates for homicide, assault, robbery, and rape are approximately 48, 43, 28, and 54, compared averages of 54, 49, 28, and 59 (2009-2019), respectively (FBI, 2020).

Figure 4. Clearance rates by crime type:
St. Louis, MO (FBI, 2020)




NOTE: Rape clearance is calculated using legacy rape counts until 2013, when revised counts became available.

[63] It is important to note that crimes are not always cleared in the year that they occur (FBI, 2020). The robbery clearance rate for 2009, for instance, does not necessarily reflect the percent of 2009 robberies that were cleared. Rather, it reflects the number of robberies cleared during 2009.

The Circuit Attorney's Office does not report case screening statistics by crime type. One limitation of the dissertation is its inability to determine whether the data used in the dissertation align with CAO official estimates.

# CHAPTER 6

# VIOLENT CRIME CASE PROCESSING:

# CLEARANCE AND CASE REFUSAL MODELS

The current chapter uses multilevel logistic regression analysis to examine the clearance and case refusal of St. Louis violent crime. Each table includes one model containing victim information, one model containing victim and suspect information, and one model containing victim-suspect racial dyad information. The first set of models compares race and clearance. Person-level characteristics are then added to each of the models to determine the relationships between victim and suspect demographics and clearance. Case-level factors are added to each of the clearance models to determine whether factors such as victim-suspect relationship and number of charges are associated with clearance. These models are followed by an analysis of person, case, and neighborhood factors, and then an analysis of person-, case-, neighborhood-, and police district-level predictors. Finally, interaction terms between race variables and victim-suspect relationship and crime type are added to the full clearance models in an attempt to tease apart the factors that might account for whether a crime is cleared by the police The second part of the chapter focuses on prosecutorial case refusal. Analyses unfold in ways that mirror the clearance models. The chapter's final section summarizes the results

from violent crime models across police and prosecutor stages, with a focus on findings pertaining to race.

## 6.1 CLEARANCE

### 6.1.1 EXAMINING RACE

Table 34 presents coefficients (ß), robust standard errors (SE), and odds ratios (OR) for clearance using race of victims and suspects as predictor variables. Model 1 assesses the relationship between victim race and clearance. In contrast to expectations, cases involving Black victims are not less likely to be cleared. Cases involving both Black and White victims are found to be more likely to be cleared than cases involving only White victims (Exp(B)= 2.70, $ß = 0.533$, $p < 0.001$).

When suspect race is included in the model (Model 2), the relationship between Black victim race and clearance becomes significant, but its direction changes, indicating in contrast to *H1A* that cases involving Black victims are about one and a half times *more* likely to be cleared than ones involving White victims (Exp(B)=1.51, $ß = 0.41$, $p < 0.05$). Cases involving White and Black victims remain about twice as likely to be cleared than cases involving White victims (Exp(B)= 2.09, $ß = 0.74$, $p < 0.001$).

Just as case neglect can be considered disadvantageous to Black victims, arrest can be considered disadvantageous to Black suspects. Since Black defendants have been shown to be more harshly punished than their non-Black counterparts (Kutateladze et al., 2014; Piehl & Bushway, 2007; Schlesinger, 2013), even in cases involving non-White victims (Hawkins, 1987; LaFree, 1980; Paternoster, 1984; Spohn & Spears, 1996; Walsh,

1987), *H2A* expected that cases involving Black suspects would be more likely to be cleared than cases that do not involve Black suspects. In contrast to this expectation,

**Table 34. Logistic regressions examining race and violent crime clearance in St. Louis, MO (2015)**

| | MODEL 1 Victim Race | | | MODEL 2 Victim and Suspect Race | | | MODEL 3 Victim-Suspect Racial Dyads | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** |
| ***Victim characteristics*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Black victim(s) | -0.043 | 0.205 | 0.958 | 0.412* | 0.171 | 1.510* | | | |
| Black and White victims | 0.533*** | 0.130 | 1.703*** | 0.737*** | 0.095 | 2.090*** | | | |
| White victim(s) (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | | | |
| ***Suspect characteristics*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Black suspect(s) | | | | -1.078*** | 0.169 | 0.340*** | | | |
| Black and White suspects | | | | -0.569 | 0.371 | 0.566 | | | |
| White suspects(s) (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | | | |
| ***Victim-suspect racial dyads*** | | | | | | | | | |
| WvWs | | | | | | | 0.801** | 0.274 | 2.228** |
| MvMs | | | | | | | 1.634* | 0.817 | 5.124* |
| BvWs | | | | | | | 0.332 | 0.210 | 1.394 |
| BvMs | | | | | | | -0.251 | 0.370 | 0.778 |
| WvBs | | | | | | | -0.489** | 0.162 | 0.613** |
| WvMs | | | | | | | 0.140 | 0.488 | 1.151 |
| MvBs | | | | | | | 0.280 | 0.231 | 1.323 |
| MvWs | | | | | | | 0.873 | 1.129 | 2.395 |
| BvBs (reference) | | | | | | | – | – | – |
| Constant | -0.424* | 0.184 | 0.655* | 0.639** | 0.207 | 1.894** | -0.008 | 0.084 | 0.992 |

* indicates p < .05, ** indicates p < .01, *** indicates p < .001

Model 1. L1 *N* = 4,091 offenses; L2 *N* = 337 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

Model 2. L1 *N* = 3,264 offenses; L2 *N* = 337 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

Model 3. L1 *N* = 3,264 offenses; L2 *N* = 337 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

Model 2 demonstrates that, regardless of victim race, cases involving Black suspects are significantly *less* likely to be cleared than cases that involve White suspects (Exp(B)= 0.34, *ß* = -1.08, $p < 0.001$). Overall, then, results generally contrast with hypotheses, as Black victims' cases appear to be provided more – not less – attention than White victims' cases, and Black suspects' cases are found to be less likely than White suspects' cases to be cleared.

Black's (1976) behavior of law theory (i.e., devaluation) expects cases involving Black suspects and White victims to be most likely to be cleared, followed by cases involving White suspects and victims, cases involving Black suspects and victims, and finally, cases involving White suspects and Black victims. Model 3 takes into consideration the combination of victim and suspect race. Results only partially align with Black's (1976) theory. In line with person devaluation and *H3*, the results demonstrate that cases involving White victims and suspects (Exp(B)= 2.23, *ß* = 0.80, $p < 0.01$) or a combination of Black and White victims and suspects (Exp(B)= 5.12, *ß* = 1.63, $p < 0.05$) are significantly more likely to be cleared than cases involving Black victims and suspects.

Results conflict with *H3*'s expectation that cases with Black suspects and White victims will be *most* likely to be cleared. In fact, cases involving Black suspects and victims, which are expected to be relatively unlikely to be cleared, are found instead to be significantly *more* likely than cases involving Black suspects and White victims to be cleared (Exp(B)= 0.61, *ß* = -0.49, $p < 0.01$). Finally, Black's theory expects cases involving Black victims and suspects to be more likely to be cleared than those

committed by White suspects against Black victims. The current study finds no statistically significant difference between these two types of cases.

### 6.1.2 EXAMINING PERSON DEVALUATION

It is important to control for other person characteristics, a number of which have been shown to affect clearance and can be understood as proxies for person devaluation. Table 35 presents coefficients (ß), robust standard errors (SE), and odds ratios (OR) for clearance using person devaluation factors across victim, victim and suspect, and victim-suspect racial dyad models.

Though a number of victim characteristics are found to be associated with clearance in the victim-only model (Model 4), Black victim race is not one of them. As was the case in Model 1, cases involving Black and White victims have higher odds of clearance than ones involving White victims (Exp(B)= 1.85, $ß = 0.62$, $p < 0.01$). In line with the ideal victim hypothesis, victim sex is a significant indicator of clearance, with complaints involving male victims (Exp(B)= 0.46, $ß = -0.79$, $p < 0.001$) and male and female victims (Exp(B)= 0.63, $ß = -0.47$, $p < 0.01$) having lower clearance odds compared to those only involving female victims. Non-Hispanic victims' cases are found to have odds of clearance that are nearly twice as large as the odds for cases involving Hispanic victims, suggesting in line with prior research (e.g., Alderden & Lavery, 2007; Litwin, 2004; Roberts & Lyons, 2011) that Hispanic victims may be disproportionately neglected by the police (Exp(B)= 1.72, $ß = 0.54$, $p < 0.01$). Victim age is not a significant predictor of clearance.

**Table 35. Logistic regressions examining person characteristics and violent crime clearance in St. Louis, MO (2015)**

| | MODEL 4 Victim Factors | | | MODEL 5 Victim and Suspect Factors | | | MODEL 6 Victim and Suspect Factors w/ Racial Dyads | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** |
| ***Victim characteristics*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Male victim(s) | -0.788*** | 0.084 | 0.455*** | -0.440*** | 0.066 | 0.644*** | -0.439*** | 0.066 | 0.645*** |
| Male and female victims | -0.465** | 0.172 | 0.628** | -0.088 | 0.195 | 0.916 | -0.091 | 0.194 | 0.913 |
| Female victim(s) (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Black victim(s) | -0.094 | 0.219 | 0.911 | 0.161 | 0.197 | 1.175 | | | |
| Black and White victims | 0.617** | 0.200 | 1.853** | 0.568* | 0.242 | 1.764* | | | |
| White victim(s) (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | | | |
| Non-Hispanic victim(s) | 0.544** | 0.172 | 1.722** | 0.731*** | 0.187 | 2.077*** | 0.737*** | 0.195 | 2.090*** |
| Hispanic victim(s) (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Victim age | 0.011 | 0.013 | 1.011 | -0.001 | 0.010 | 0.999 | -0.001 | 0.010 | 0.999 |
| Victim age squared | -0.000 | 0.000 | 1.000 | -0.000 | 0.000 | 1.000 | -0.000 | 0.000 | 1.000 |
| Victims of multiple ages | -0.009 | 0.137 | 0.991 | 0.081 | 0.240 | 1.084 | 0.091 | 0.235 | 1.095 |
| Victim(s) of single age (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Suspect characteristics*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Male suspect(s) | | | | -0.549*** | 0.061 | 0.578*** | -0.547*** | 0.061 | 0.579*** |
| Male and female suspects | | | | -0.274 | 0.148 | 0.760 | -0.270 | 0.148 | 0.763 |
| Female suspect(s) (reference) | | | | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Black suspect(s) | | | | -0.966*** | 0.145 | 0.381*** | – | – | – |
| Black and White suspects | | | | -0.821 | 0.611 | 0.440 | – | – | – |
| White suspect(s) (reference) | | | | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Non-Hispanic suspect(s) | | | | 0.427* | 0.211 | 1.532* | 0.423 | 0.223 | 1.527 |
| Hispanic suspect(s) (reference) | | | | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Suspect age | | | | 0.029 | 0.018 | 1.030 | 0.029 | 0.018 | 1.029 |
| Suspect age squared | | | | -0.000 | 0.000 | 1.000 | -0.000 | 0.000 | 1.000 |
| Suspects of multiple ages | | | | 0.231 | 0.139 | 1.260 | 0.234 | 0.150 | 1.263 |
| Suspect(s) of single age (reference) | | | | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Victim-suspect racial dyads*** | | | | | | | | | |
| WvWs | | | | | | | 0.828*** | 0.239 | 2.289*** |
| MvMs | | | | | | | 0.951 | 0.848 | 2.590 |
| BvWs | | | | | | | 0.766* | 0.369 | 2.150* |
| BvMs | | | | | | | -0.22 | 0.556 | 0.802 |

**Table 35 (continued)**

| | MODEL 4 | | | MODEL 5 | | | MODEL 6 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** |
| WvBs | | | | | | | -0.175 | 0.197 | 0.840 |
| WvMs | | | | | | | -0.124 | 0.958 | 0.883 |
| MvBs | | | | | | | 0.343 | 0.236 | 1.410 |
| MvWs | | | | | | | 1.539 | 1.111 | 4.659 |
| BvBs (reference) | | | | | | | – | – | – |
| Constant | -0.527** | 0.177 | 0.590** | 0.341 | 0.426 | 1.406 | -0.462 | 0.344 | 0.630 |

* indicates p < .05, ** indicates p < .01, *** indicates p < .001
Model 4. L1 *N* = 3,943 offenses; L2 *N* = 336 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts
Model 5. L1 *N* = 2,364 offenses; L2 *N* = 326 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts
Model 6. L1 *N* = 2,364 offenses; L2 *N* = 326 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

Model 5, which includes suspect characteristics, finds similar relationships between victim characteristics and clearance, with the exception of male and female sexes no longer being significant. Although the direction of Black victim race becomes positive as it did in Model 2, it is not significant when various victim and offender characteristics are included, underlining the importance of including relevant control variables in studies of race. As was the case in Model 2, and in contrast to expectations, cases involving Black suspects are significantly less likely than ones involving White suspects to be cleared (Exp(B)= 0.38, *ß* = -0.97, $p < 0.001$). Though victim and suspect age are not significant predictors of clearance, male and Hispanic suspects appear to be less harshly punished than female and non-Hispanic suspects at this stage of case processing, which is in contrast to prior research (e.g., Ulmer, 2012).

In the racial dyad model (Model 6), victim sex and ethnicity remain significant predictors of clearance, with male victims (Exp(B)= 0.65, *ß* = -0.44, $p < 0.001$) and Hispanic victims being less likely to have their crimes cleared than female and non-Hispanic victims (Exp(B)= 2.09, *ß* = 0.74, $p < 0.001$). In line with Model 5, male suspects' cases remain less likely than female suspects' cases to be cleared (Exp(B)= 0.57, *ß* = -0.56, $p < 0.001$).

Only two racial dyads remain significantly associated with clearance when a comprehensive set of person characteristics is controlled for. The findings demonstrate that cases involving White suspects and White or Black victims are more likely to be cleared than ones involving Black suspects and victims. In line with *H3* and Model 3, the results demonstrate that cases involving White victims and suspects are over two times as likely as ones involving Black victims and suspects to be cleared (Exp(B)= 2.23, *ß* =

0.83, $p < 0.001$). In contrast to the devaluation hypothesis, cases committed by White suspects against Black victims are also over twice as likely to be cleared than those committed by Black suspects against Black victims (Exp(B)= 2.15, $ß = 0.77$, $p < 0.05$). Although the multiple victim races-White suspect category is non-significant in this model, these results suggest that there is something about cases involving White suspects that may garner attention from the police.

### 6.1.3 EXAMINING PERSONS AND CASES

Case characteristics are entered into the next set of models (Table 36), making it possible to examine the relationships between solvability, justice system action, person devaluation, and case devaluation indicators and clearance. Recall that in earlier iterations of the clearance model, victim race and clearance did not relate to one another in ways that aligned with expectations. In the victim-specific model of clearance (Model 7), victim race emerges as a significant predictor of clearance in ways that align with *H1A*, with crimes involving Black victims being less likely to be cleared than those involving non-Black victims (Exp(B)= 0.56, $ß = -0.58$, $p < 0.01$). In line with the ideal victim hypothesis, victim sex is also a significant indicator of clearance, with complaints involving all male victims having lower clearance likelihoods compared to those only involving females (Exp(B)= 0.75, $ß = -0.29$, $p < 0.01$). Victim ethnicity is a significant predictor of clearance, with the odds of case clearance for non-Hispanic victims being 1.93 higher than for Hispanic victims ($ß = 0.66$, $p < 0.05$).

Both Models 8 and 9, which include suspect information and therefore should be interpreted with caution, find that complaints involving male and Hispanic victims are

**Table 36. Logistic regressions examining person and case characteristics and violent crime clearance in St. Louis, MO (2015)**

| | MODEL 7 Victim and Case Factors | | | MODEL 8 Victim, Suspect, and Case Factors | | | MODEL 9 Victim, Suspect, and Case Factors w/ Racial Dyads | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** |
| ***Victim characteristics*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Male victim(s) | -0.293** | 0.106 | 0.746** | -0.264** | 0.102 | 0.768** | -0.265* | 0.104 | 0.767* |
| Male and female victims | -0.213 | 0.195 | 0.808 | -0.122 | 0.259 | 0.885 | -0.136 | 0.258 | 0.873 |
| Female victim(s) (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Black victim(s) | -0.584** | 0.178 | 0.558** | -0.460 | 0.236 | 0.631 | – | – | – |
| Black and White victims | 0.079 | 0.111 | 1.083 | 0.130 | 0.261 | 1.139 | – | – | – |
| White victim(s) (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Non-Hispanic victim(s) | 0.656* | 0.307 | 1.927* | 0.831** | 0.261 | 2.296** | 0.798** | 0.252 | 2.222** |
| Hispanic victim(s) (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Victim age | 0.019 | 0.024 | 1.019 | 0.013 | 0.011 | 1.013 | 0.014 | 0.011 | 1.014 |
| Victim age squared | -0.000 | 0.000 | 1.000 | -0.000 | 0.000 | 1.000 | -0.000 | 0.000 | 1.000 |
| Victims of multiple ages | 0.038 | 0.252 | 1.039 | -0.030 | 0.332 | 0.971 | -0.024 | 0.331 | 0.976 |
| Victim(s) of single age (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Suspect characteristics*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Male suspect(s) | | | | 0.031 | 0.084 | 1.032 | 0.034 | 0.086 | 1.034 |
| Male and female suspects | | | | 0.118 | 0.231 | 1.126 | 0.145 | 0.235 | 1.156 |
| Female suspect(s) (reference) | | | | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Black suspect(s) | | | | -0.592*** | 0.133 | 0.553*** | – | – | – |
| Black and White suspects | | | | -0.483 | 0.777 | 0.617 | – | – | – |
| White suspect(s) (references) | | | | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Non-Hispanic suspect(s) | | | | 0.640 | 0.429 | 1.896 | 0.695 | 0.378 | 2.003 |
| Hispanic suspect(s) (reference) | | | | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Suspect age | | | | -0.020 | 0.024 | 0.981 | -0.020 | 0.023 | 0.981 |
| Suspect age squared | | | | 0.000 | 0.000 | 1.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 1.000 |
| Suspects of multiple ages | | | | 0.595* | 0.243 | 1.812* | 0.609* | 0.248 | 1.839* |
| Suspect(s) of single age (reference) | | | | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Victim-suspect racial dyads*** | | | | | | | | | |
| WvWs | | | | | | | 0.513* | 0.242 | 1.670* |

| **Table 36 (continued)** | **MODEL 7** | | | **MODEL 8** | | | **MODEL 9** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** |
| MvMs | | | | | | | 0.995*** | 0.218 | 2.704*** |
| BvWs | | | | | | | 1.000 | 0.748 | 2.718 |
| BvMs | | | | | | | 0.964** | 0.324 | 2.623** |
| WvBs | | | | | | | 0.568 | 0.683 | 1.765 |
| WvMs | | | | | | | -0.249 | 1.310 | 0.780 |
| MvBs | | | | | | | 0.551 | 0.403 | 1.735 |
| MvWs | | | | | | | 1.271* | 0.571 | 3.563* |
| BvBs (reference) | | | | | | | – | – | – |
| ***Most serious crime type*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Homicide | 1.394* | 0.615 | 4.030* | 1.276* | 0.635 | 3.582* | 1.262 | 0.646 | 3.532 |
| Robbery | -0.253*** | 0.062 | 0.776*** | -0.059 | 0.112 | 0.943 | -0.066 | 0.116 | 0.936 |
| Rape | -0.525 | 0.305 | 0.592 | -0.704*** | 0.180 | 0.494*** | -0.692*** | 0.179 | 0.500*** |
| Assault (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Charge and person counts*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Number of charges | 0.422*** | 0.048 | 1.525*** | 0.386*** | 0.065 | 1.472*** | 0.392*** | 0.070 | 1.480*** |
| Number of victims | -0.073 | 0.056 | 0.930 | -0.066 | 0.072 | 0.936 | -0.066 | 0.072 | 0.936 |
| Number of suspects | 0.171 | 0.093 | 1.187 | -0.054 | 0.142 | 0.948 | -0.046 | 0.145 | 0.956 |
| ***Weapon type(s)*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Firearm | -0.331** | 0.108 | 0.718** | -0.287 | 0.200 | 0.751 | -0.286 | 0.194 | 0.751 |
| Knife | 0.222 | 0.186 | 1.248 | 0.201 | 0.215 | 1.223 | 0.208 | 0.210 | 1.231 |
| Unknown/other weapon | -0.911 | 0.639 | 0.402 | -0.983 | 0.611 | 0.374 | -0.966 | 0.608 | 0.381 |
| Multiple weapon types | 0.207 | 0.222 | 1.230 | 0.447* | 0.226 | 1.564* | 0.430 | 0.234 | 1.537 |
| No weapon | -0.005 | 0.236 | 0.995 | 0.074 | 0.293 | 1.077 | 0.059 | 0.296 | 1.061 |
| Personal weapon (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Victim injury*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Minor victim injury | -0.198 | 0.107 | 0.820 | -0.217 | 0.148 | 0.805 | -0.210 | 0.147 | 0.811 |
| Major victim injury | 0.370** | 0.118 | 1.447** | 0.300 | 0.203 | 1.350 | 0.311 | 0.200 | 1.365 |
| Multiple injury types | 0.041 | 0.341 | 1.042 | -0.116 | 0.401 | 0.891 | -0.098 | 0.405 | 0.907 |
| No/unknown injury (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Victim-suspect relationship*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Within family | 1.446*** | 0.130 | 4.244*** | 1.174*** | 0.244 | 3.235*** | 1.191*** | 0.235 | 3.290*** |

| **Table 36 (continued)** | **MODEL 7** | | | **MODEL 8** | | | **MODEL 9** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** |
| Outside of family | 1.519*** | 0.170 | 4.569*** | 1.335*** | 0.174 | 3.801*** | 1.348*** | 0.175 | 3.849*** |
| Other relationship | -0.687 | 1.169 | 0.503 | -1.376 | 1.021 | 0.253 | -1.361 | 1.030 | 0.256 |
| Unknown relationship | -0.996*** | 0.080 | 0.369*** | -0.515*** | 0.068 | 0.598*** | -0.505*** | 0.065 | 0.604*** |
| Relationship not applicable | 0.851** | 0.315 | 2.341** | 0.720** | 0.259 | 2.054** | 0.733** | 0.266 | 2.081** |
| Multiple relationships | 0.380 | 0.220 | 1.462 | 0.177 | 0.221 | 1.194 | 0.165 | 0.224 | 1.180 |
| Stranger (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Additional controls*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Second shift | -0.049 | 0.154 | 0.953 | 0.038 | 0.147 | 1.038 | 0.038 | 0.146 | 1.039 |
| Third shift | -0.268 | 0.160 | 0.765 | -0.303 | 0.163 | 0.739 | -0.304 | 0.167 | 0.738 |
| First shift (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Weekday | 0.047 | 0.114 | 1.048 | 0.076 | 0.114 | 1.079 | 0.067 | 0.109 | 1.069 |
| Weekend (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Attempted | -0.452** | 0.142 | 0.636** | -0.573*** | 0.160 | 0.564*** | -0.550*** | 0.162 | 0.577*** |
| Completed (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Domestic | 1.023*** | 0.227 | 2.780*** | 0.768** | 0.251 | 2.155** | 0.771** | 0.251 | 2.162** |
| Not domestic (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Justice system action*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Witness | -0.018 | 0.203 | 0.982 | -0.118 | 0.236 | 0.889 | -0.119 | 0.239 | 0.888 |
| No witness (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Constant | -1.558*** | 0.366 | 0.211*** | -0.714* | 0.316 | 0.489* | -1.834*** | 0.195 | 0.160*** |

* indicates p < .05, ** indicates p < .01, *** indicates p < .001

Model 7. L1 *N* = 2,855 offenses; L2 *N* = 333 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

Model 8. L1 *N* = 2,168 offenses; L2 *N* = 323 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

Model 9. L1 *N* = 2,168 offenses; L2 *N* = 323 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

significantly less likely to be cleared than ones involving female and non-Hispanic victims in ways that are consistent with Model 7 results. In the victim and suspects model (Model 8), victim race is not significant.

Both suspect models (Models 8 and 9) find that suspects of multiple age categories are more likely to be cleared than ones involving suspects of similar ages (Model 8: Exp(B)= 1.81, $ß = 0.60$, $p < 0.05$; Model 9: Exp(B)= 1.84, $ß = 0.61$, $p < 0.05$). In line with prior models (Models 2 and 5), and in contrast still with *H2A*, complaints involving Black suspects are significantly less likely to be cleared than ones involving non-Black suspects in Model 8 (Exp(B)= 0.55, $ß = -0.59$, $p < 0.001$).

In the victim-suspect racial dyad model (Model 9), cases involving White suspects and victims are significantly more likely than ones involving Black suspects and victims to be cleared. Specifically, and consistent with prior clearance models, compared to cases involving Black victims and suspects, cases involving White victims and suspects are more likely to be cleared (Exp(B)= 1.67, $ß = 0.51$, $p < 0.05$). In line with Model 3, but not Model 6, cases involving a combination of Black and White victims and suspects are significantly more likely to be cleared than cases involving Black victims and suspects (Exp(B)= 2.70, $ß = 1.00$, $p < 0.05$). In contrast to prior clearance models, complaints involving Black victims and Black and White suspects are found to have odds of clearance that are over two and a half times higher than the odds for cases involving Black victims and suspects (Exp(B)= 2.62, $ß = 0.96$, $p < 0.01$), and complaints involving Black and White victims and White suspects are found to have odds of clearance that are over three and a half times higher than those for cases involving Black victims and

suspects (Exp(B)= 3.56, ß = 1.27, $p < 0.05$).[64] These results suggest that cases involving White suspects will be cleared by the police regardless of victim race, and that Black victims will be neglected unless specifically victimized by White offenders.

In Model 7, crime type, weapon type, victim-suspect relationship, domestic status, attempted status, and number of charges emerge as significant predictors of clearance in ways that are mostly in line with the situational thesis. Homicide cases are found to have odds of clearance that are about four times higher than for assaults (Exp(B)= 4.03, ß = 1.39, $p < 0.05$), and the odds of a crime being cleared by arrest are 22.4 percent lower for robberies than for assaults (Exp(B)= 0.78, ß = -0.25, $p < 0.001$). Rapes are not significantly more or less likely than assaults to be cleared.

Complaints involving firearms have odds of clearance that are significantly lower than ones involving personal weapons (Exp(B)= 0.72, ß = -0.33, $p < 0.01$). In contrast to expectations, however, complaints involving unknown or other weapon types are not less likely to be cleared than personal weapon complaints, and complaints involving knives and multiple weapon types are not significantly more likely than ones involving personal weapons and one type of weapon to be cleared in this model.

Victim-suspect relationships have large effects on clearance. Compared to crimes involving strangers, those involving persons known to the victim have odds of clearance that are significantly high, with complaints involving within family (Exp(B)= 4.24, ß = 1.45, $p < 0.001$) and outside of family (Exp(B)= 4.57, ß = 1.52, $p < 0.001$) relationships having the largest effects. Complaints involving unknown victim-suspect relationships

[64] The results conflict with Black's expectation that cases involving Black victims and suspects will be more likely to be cleared than those committed by White suspects against Black victims. The current study finds the opposite: offenses committed by Black suspects against Black victims are *less* likely to be cleared than ones committed by White suspects against Black victims, but this relationship is not significant.

have odds of clearance that are about 63 percent lower than stranger complaints (Exp(B)= 0.37, ß = -1.00, $p < 0.001$), and those cases falling within the relationship not applicable category are about twice as likely as stranger cases to be cleared (Exp(B)= 2.34, ß = 0.85, $p < 0.01$).

In line with the situational thesis and past research (e.g., Taylor, et al., 2009), crimes involving major injuries have clearance likelihoods that are significantly higher (Exp(B)= 1.45, ß = 0.37, $p < 0.01$) than those for crimes involving no/unknown injuries, but crimes involving minor injuries or multiple victim injuries are not significantly more likely than ones involving no/unknown injuries to be cleared. Though research has demonstrated that victim injury significantly increases clearance odds for rape (D'Alessio & Stolzenberg, 2003), assault (D'Alessio & Stolzenberg, 2003), and robbery (Snyder, 1999), recent evidence from St. Louis, MO suggests that victims might not cooperate with criminal justice systems, even when seriously injured (Hipple et al., 2019). Qualitative research should be conducted to further examine why major, but not minor, injuries are associated with clearance.

In line with the case solvability thesis, domestic offenses are significantly more likely to be cleared than offenses that did not occur within the home (Exp(B)= 2.78, ß = 1.02, $p < 0.001$). Number of charges emerges as a significant predictor of clearance in expected ways, with the odds of clearance increasing by 0.42 each time a charge is added to a complaint (Exp(B)= 1.53, $p < 0.001$). As hypothesized, attempted crime status is negatively associated with clearance (Exp(B)= 0.64, ß = -0.45, $p < 0.01$).

In contrast to the case solvability thesis, relative to first shift offenses, those that occur during the late afternoon or evening (second shift) or during the night and early

morning (third shift) do not have odds of clearance that are significantly lower, and crimes that occur on weekdays are not more or less likely than ones that occur on the weekends to be cleared. Further, complaints involving more than one suspect or victim are not significantly more likely to be cleared than ones involving one suspect or victim. Finally, the current set of models includes a witness variable to determine whether justice system action affects clearance. In contrast with expectations, witness information is not related to clearance.

Although most non-race findings are similar to those found in Model 7, results relating to crime type, weapons, and injuries do differ in Models 8 and 9 when compared to the corresponding victim model. In Model 8, robbery clearances no longer significantly differ from the clearance of assaults, and in Model 9, homicide and robbery crimes are non-significant indicators of clearance. In Models 8 and 9, rape cases are found to be about 50 percent less likely than assaults to be cleared (Model 8: Exp(B)= 0.49, $ß$ = -0.70, $p < 0.001$; Model 9: Exp(B)= 0.50, $ß$ = -0.69, $p < 0.001$). Additionally, firearm and major victim injury variables lose their significance in the suspect models. Multiple weapon types are found to be positively related to clearance in Model 8, but not Model 9 (Exp(B)= 1.56, $ß$ = 0.45, $p < 0.05$).

### 6.1.4 EXAMINING, PERSONS, CASES, AND NEIGHBORHOODS

With the exception of crime type and racial dyad findings, results do not change much when neighborhood factors are considered in models (see Table 37). Concentrated

**Table 37. Logistic regressions examining person-, case-, and neighborhood-level characteristics and violent crime clearance in St. Louis, MO (2015)**

| | MODEL 10 Victim, Case, and Neighborhood Factors | | | MODEL 11 Victim, Suspect, Case, and Neighborhood Factors | | | MODEL 12 Victim, Suspect, Case, and Neighborhood Factors w/ Racial Dyads | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** |
| ***Victim characteristics*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Male victim(s) | -0.295** | 0.109 | 0.744** | -0.269* | 0.107 | 0.764* | -0.270* | 0.109 | 0.764* |
| Male and female victims | -0.218 | 0.195 | 0.804 | -0.131 | 0.259 | 0.877 | -0.144 | 0.258 | 0.866 |
| Female victim(s) (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Black victim(s) | -0.503* | 0.195 | 0.605* | -0.375 | 0.239 | 0.687 | – | – | – |
| Black and White victims | 0.111 | 0.117 | 1.117 | 0.171 | 0.283 | 1.186 | – | – | – |
| White victim(s) (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Non-Hispanic victim(s) | 0.617* | 0.301 | 1.852* | 0.788** | 0.252 | 2.200** | 0.766** | 0.238 | 2.152** |
| Hispanic victim(s) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Victim age | 0.019 | 0.024 | 1.019 | 0.013 | 0.011 | 1.013 | 0.013 | 0.011 | 1.013 |
| Victim age squared | 0.000 | 0.000 | 1.000 | -0.000 | 0.000 | 1.000 | -0.000 | 0.000 | 1.000 |
| Victims of multiple ages | 0.046 | 0.249 | 1.047 | -0.020 | 0.331 | 0.980 | -0.016 | 0.331 | 0.984 |
| Victim(s) of single age (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Suspect characteristics*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Male suspect(s) | | | | 0.048 | 0.091 | 1.049 | 0.049 | 0.092 | 1.050 |
| Male and female suspects | | | | 0.145 | 0.232 | 1.156 | 0.168 | 0.238 | 1.183 |
| Female suspect(s) (reference) | | | | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Black suspect(s) | | | | -0.519*** | 0.145 | 0.595*** | – | – | – |
| Black and White suspects | | | | -0.469 | 0.751 | 0.626 | – | – | – |
| White suspect(s) (reference) | | | | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Non-Hispanic suspect(s) | | | | 0.664 | 0.442 | 1.943 | 0.702 | 0.391 | 2.017 |
| Hispanic suspect(s) (reference) | | | | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Suspect age | | | | -0.018 | 0.023 | 0.982 | -0.018 | 0.022 | 0.982 |
| Suspect age squared | | | | 0.000 | 0.000 | 1.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 1.000 |
| Suspects of multiple ages | | | | 0.599* | 0.25 | 1.819* | 0.612* | 0.255 | 1.845* |
| Suspect(s) of single age (reference) | | | | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Victim-suspect racial dyads*** | | | | | | | | | |
| WvWs | | | | | | | 0.425 | 0.244 | 1.529 |
| MvMs | | | | | | | 0.854*** | 0.205 | 2.349*** |
| BvWs | | | | | | | 0.886 | 0.741 | 2.425 |

| **Table 37 (continued)** | **MODEL 10** | | | **MODEL 11** | | | **MODEL 12** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** |
| BvMs | | | | | | | 0.839* | 0.345 | 2.314* |
| WvBs | | | | | | | 0.469 | 0.683 | 1.599 |
| WvMs | | | | | | | -0.312 | 1.323 | 0.732 |
| MvBs | | | | | | | 0.516 | 0.364 | 1.675 |
| MvWs | | | | | | | 1.055 | 0.626 | 2.871 |
| BvBs (reference) | | | | | | | – | – | – |
| ***Most serious crime type*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Homicide | 1.355* | 0.639 | 3.875* | 1.242 | 0.663 | 3.463 | 1.232 | 0.674 | 3.429 |
| Robbery | -0.249*** | 0.065 | 0.780*** | -0.059 | 0.113 | 0.943 | -0.066 | 0.116 | 0.936 |
| Rape | -0.533 | 0.304 | 0.587 | -0.731*** | 0.180 | 0.481*** | -0.721*** | 0.179 | 0.486 |
| Assault (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Charge and person counts*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Number of charges | 0.423*** | 0.049 | 1.526*** | 0.387*** | 0.066 | 1.472*** | 0.392*** | 0.070 | 1.480*** |
| Number of victims | -0.068 | 0.057 | 0.934 | -0.065 | 0.075 | 0.937 | -0.064 | 0.075 | 0.938 |
| Number of suspects | 0.166 | 0.095 | 1.181 | -0.060 | 0.143 | 0.942 | -0.052 | 0.146 | 0.949 |
| ***Weapon type(s)*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Firearm | -0.317** | 0.104 | 0.728** | -0.277 | 0.185 | 0.758 | -0.277 | 0.181 | 0.758 |
| Knife | 0.226 | 0.180 | 1.254 | 0.212 | 0.203 | 1.237 | 0.218 | 0.201 | 1.243 |
| Unknown/other weapon | -0.944 | 0.614 | 0.389 | -1.033 | 0.584 | 0.356 | -1.017 | 0.582 | 0.362 |
| Multiple weapon types | 0.210 | 0.227 | 1.233 | 0.453* | 0.226 | 1.574* | 0.438 | 0.233 | 1.549 |
| No weapon | 0.001 | 0.232 | 1.001 | 0.082 | 0.286 | 1.085 | 0.069 | 0.291 | 1.071 |
| Personal weapon (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Victim injury*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Minor injury | -0.198 | 0.111 | 0.821 | -0.223 | 0.152 | 0.800 | -0.217 | 0.151 | 0.805 |
| Major injury | 0.374** | 0.120 | 1.453** | 0.296 | 0.202 | 1.344 | 0.305 | 0.199 | 1.357 |
| Multiple injury types | 0.075 | 0.347 | 1.078 | -0.074 | 0.405 | 0.929 | -0.061 | 0.408 | 0.940 |
| No/unknown injury (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Victim-suspect relationship*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Within family | 1.454*** | 0.122 | 4.279*** | 1.181*** | 0.235 | 3.257*** | 1.194*** | 0.228 | 3.301*** |
| Outside of family | 1.528*** | 0.177 | 4.611*** | 1.353*** | 0.180 | 3.867*** | 1.362*** | 0.181 | 3.904*** |
| Other relationship | -0.657 | 1.216 | 0.518 | -1.340 | 1.058 | 0.262 | -1.331 | 1.068 | 0.264 |
| Unknown relationship | -0.987*** | 0.081 | 0.373*** | -0.514*** | 0.073 | 0.598*** | -0.507*** | 0.072 | 0.602 |
| Relationship not applicable | 0.857** | 0.311 | 2.356** | 0.732** | 0.262 | 2.079** | 0.742** | 0.267 | 2.101** |
| Multiple relationships | 0.395 | 0.229 | 1.485 | 0.200 | 0.226 | 1.221 | 0.185 | 0.226 | 1.203 |

| **Table 37 (continued)** | **MODEL 10** | | | **MODEL 11** | | | **MODEL 12** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** |
| Stranger (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Additional controls*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Second shift | -0.057 | 0.155 | 0.944 | 0.026 | 0.147 | 1.026 | 0.027 | 0.146 | 1.027 |
| Third shift | -0.277 | 0.158 | 0.758 | -0.313 | 0.163 | 0.731 | -0.314 | 0.167 | 0.730 |
| First shift (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Weekday | 0.053 | 0.120 | 1.055 | 0.081 | 0.122 | 1.084 | 0.073 | 0.119 | 1.075 |
| Weekend (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Attempted | -0.465*** | 0.136 | 0.628*** | -0.590*** | 0.168 | 0.554*** | -0.568*** | 0.168 | 0.566*** |
| Completed (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Domestic | 1.030*** | 0.234 | 2.802*** | 0.774** | 0.255 | 2.168** | 0.776** | 0.254 | 2.173** |
| Not domestic (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Justice system action*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Witness | 0.005 | 0.203 | 1.005 | -0.096 | 0.237 | 0.909 | -0.098 | 0.240 | 0.907 |
| No witness (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Neighborhood characteristics*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Concentrated disadvantage | -0.018 | 0.056 | 0.983 | 0.008 | 0.088 | 1.008 | 0.008 | 0.088 | 1.009 |
| Percent Black | -0.003 | 0.002 | 0.997 | -0.004 | 0.003 | 0.996 | -0.004 | 0.003 | 0.996 |
| Population | 0.037 | 0.105 | 1.038 | 0.052 | 0.070 | 1.054 | 0.052 | 0.076 | 1.053 |
| Cross-classified | 0.040 | 0.053 | 1.041 | 0.084 | 0.058 | 1.087 | 0.078 | 0.056 | 1.081 |
| Not cross-classified (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Neighborhood crime | 0.002 | 0.003 | 1.002 | 0.001 | 0.004 | 1.001 | 0.001 | 0.004 | 1.001 |
| Constant | -1.730** | 0.559 | 0.177** | -1.017* | 0.461 | 0.362* | -1.970*** | 0.454 | 0.139*** |

* indicates p < .05, ** indicates p < .01, *** indicates p < .001

Model 10. L1 *N* = 2,854 offenses; L2 *N* = 332 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

Model 11. L1 *N* = 2,167 offenses; L2 *N* = 322 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

Model 12. L1 *N* = 2,167 offenses; L2 *N* = 322 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

disadvantage, racial composition, cross-classification status, and population size are all non-significant predictors of clearance, suggesting generally that these neighborhood factors do not predict clearance. In contrast to the group devaluation perspective, crimes committed in areas with larger Black populations are not found to be significantly less likely to be cleared than those committed in predominately non-Black block groups. In contrast to the association devaluation hypothesis, neighborhood crime does not emerge as a significant predictor of clearance across models.

In both suspect models (Models 11 and 12), robbery and homicide crime types become non-significant predictors of clearance. Perhaps most germane for the purposes of the current study are the findings relating to racial dyads. Cases involving Black victims (on their own and in combination with White victims) and Black and White suspects are about 2.3 times more likely to be cleared than cases involving Black suspects and victims (MvMs: Exp(B) = 2.35, ß = 0.85, $p < 0.001$; BvMs: Exp(B) = 2.31, ß = 0.84, $p < 0.05$) when neighborhood factors are controlled for. In contrast to devaluation theory, this suggests that Black victims are prioritized by the criminal justice system when victimized by White and Black suspect(s).

### 6.1.5 EXAMINING PERSONS, CASES, NEIGHBORHOODS, AND POLICE DISTRICTS

Detective workload and district crime rates are added to the models (Table 38) to determine whether police workloads and resources impact clearance. Across all clearance models, effects and significance levels remain consistent with earlier models, with detective workload and district crime rates having non-significant effects on clearance.

**Table 38. Logistic regressions examining person, case, neighborhood, and police district characteristics and violent crime clearance in St. Louis, MO (2015)**

| | MODEL 13 Victim, Case, Neighborhood, and Police District Factors | | | MODEL 14 Victim, Suspect, Case, Neighborhood, and Police District Factors | | | MODEL 15 Victim, Suspect, Case, Neighborhood, and Police District Factors w/ Racial Dyads | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** |
| ***Victim characteristics*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Male victim(s) | -0.296** | 0.110 | 0.744** | -0.269* | 0.107 | 0.764* | -0.270* | 0.108 | 0.763* |
| Male and female victims | -0.215 | 0.196 | 0.807 | -0.130 | 0.257 | 0.878 | -0.143 | 0.256 | 0.867 |
| Female victim(s) (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Black victim(s) | -0.489* | 0.204 | 0.613* | -0.372 | 0.243 | 0.689 | | | |
| Black and White victims | 0.110 | 0.120 | 1.116 | 0.161 | 0.290 | 1.175 | | | |
| White victim(s) (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | | | |
| Non-Hispanic victim(s) | 0.652* | 0.288 | 1.919* | 0.812*** | 0.240 | 2.253*** | 0.789*** | 0.223 | 2.202*** |
| Hispanic victim(s) (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Victim age | 0.019 | 0.024 | 1.019 | 0.013 | 0.011 | 1.013 | 0.013 | 0.011 | 1.013 |
| Victim age squared | -0.000 | 0.000 | 1.000 | -0.000 | 0.000 | 1.000 | -0.000 | 0.000 | 1.000 |
| Victims of multiple ages | 0.046 | 0.246 | 1.047 | -0.023 | 0.328 | 0.977 | -0.019 | 0.328 | 0.981 |
| Victim(s) of single age (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Suspect characteristics*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Male suspect(s) | | | | 0.046 | 0.097 | 1.047 | 0.047 | 0.098 | 1.048 |
| Male and female suspects | | | | 0.142 | 0.235 | 1.153 | 0.167 | 0.240 | 1.182 |
| Female suspect(s) (reference) | | | | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Black suspect(s) | | | | -0.501*** | 0.145 | 0.606*** | | | |
| Black and White suspects | | | | -0.484 | 0.758 | 0.616 | | | |
| White suspect(s) (reference) | | | | – | – | – | | | |
| Non-Hispanic suspect(s) | | | | 0.642 | 0.423 | 1.901 | 0.678 | 0.371 | 1.971 |
| Hispanic suspect(s) (reference) | | | | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Suspect age | | | | -0.018 | 0.023 | 0.982 | -0.018 | 0.022 | 0.982 |
| Suspect age squared | | | | 0.000 | 0.000 | 1.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 1.000 |
| Suspects of multiple ages | | | | 0.591* | 0.254 | 1.806* | 0.605* | 0.259 | 1.832* |
| Suspect(s) of single age (reference) | | | | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Victim-suspect racial dyads*** | | | | | | | | | |
| WvWs | | | | | | | 0.422 | 0.249 | 1.525 |
| MvMs | | | | | | | 0.834*** | 0.212 | 2.303*** |

| **Table 38 (continued)** | **MODEL 13** | | | **MODEL 14** | | | **MODEL 15** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** |
| BvWs | | | | | | | 0.838 | 0.806 | 2.312 |
| BvMs | | | | | | | 0.823* | 0.327 | 2.276* |
| WvBs | | | | | | | 0.000 | 0.694 | 1.562 |
| WvMs | | | | | | | -0.350 | 1.304 | 0.705 |
| MvBs | | | | | | | 0.503 | 0.355 | 1.653 |
| MvWs | | | | | | | 1.015 | 0.660 | 2.758 |
| BvBs (reference) | | | | | | | – | – | – |
| ***Most serious crime type*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Homicide | 1.381* | 0.655 | 3.980* | 1.245 | 0.658 | 3.473 | 1.234 | 0.669 | 3.434 |
| Robbery | -0.242*** | 0.064 | 0.785*** | -0.057 | 0.111 | 0.945 | -0.064 | 0.114 | 0.938 |
| Rape | -0.517 | 0.307 | 0.596 | -0.725*** | 0.174 | 0.484*** | -0.716*** | 0.173 | 0.489*** |
| Assault (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Charge and person counts*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Number of charges | 0.423*** | 0.049 | 1.527*** | 0.387*** | 0.066 | 1.472*** | 0.392*** | 0.069 | 1.480*** |
| Number of victims | -0.068 | 0.056 | 0.934 | -0.063 | 0.074 | 0.939 | -0.062 | 0.074 | 0.940 |
| Number of suspects | 0.169 | 0.095 | 1.184 | -0.056 | 0.143 | 0.945 | -0.049 | 0.146 | 0.952 |
| ***Weapon type(s)*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Firearm | -0.317** | 0.102 | 0.728** | -0.278 | 0.185 | 0.757 | -0.278 | 0.181 | 0.757 |
| Knife | 0.229 | 0.177 | 1.257 | 0.216 | 0.205 | 1.241 | 0.222 | 0.203 | 1.248 |
| Unknown/other weapon | -0.948 | 0.616 | 0.387 | -1.034 | 0.582 | 0.356 | -1.018 | 0.579 | 0.361 |
| Multiple weapon types | 0.212 | 0.225 | 1.236 | 0.447* | 0.224 | 1.564* | 0.430 | 0.230 | 1.538 |
| No weapon | 0.008 | 0.234 | 1.008 | 0.086 | 0.283 | 1.090 | 0.072 | 0.287 | 1.075 |
| Personal weapon (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Victim injury*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Minor injury | -0.199 | 0.113 | 0.819 | -0.222 | 0.149 | 0.801 | -0.217 | 0.149 | 0.805 |
| Major injury | 0.372** | 0.118 | 1.451** | 0.288 | 0.194 | 1.334 | 0.297 | 0.192 | 1.346 |
| Multiple injury types | 0.062 | 0.347 | 1.064 | -0.086 | 0.397 | 0.917 | -0.074 | 0.401 | 0.929 |
| No/unknown injury (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Victim-suspect relationship*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Within family | 1.447*** | 0.132 | 4.252*** | 1.184*** | 0.249 | 3.268*** | 1.199*** | 0.243 | 3.315*** |
| Outside of family | 1.523*** | 0.178 | 4.587*** | 1.355*** | 0.184 | 3.877*** | 1.366*** | 0.186 | 3.918*** |
| Other relationship | -0.660 | 1.212 | 0.517 | -1.332 | 1.061 | 0.264 | -1.323 | 1.071 | 0.266 |
| Unknown relationship | -0.990*** | 0.091 | 0.371*** | -0.508*** | 0.078 | 0.601*** | -0.500*** | 0.075 | 0.607*** |
| Relationship not applicable | 0.861** | 0.311 | 2.366** | 0.739** | 0.253 | 2.094** | 0.749** | 0.259 | 2.114** |

**Table 38 (continued)**

| | MODEL 13 | | | MODEL 14 | | | MODEL 15 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** |
| Multiple relationships | 0.389 | 0.229 | 1.476 | 0.197 | 0.225 | 1.218 | 0.183 | 0.224 | 1.201 |
| Stranger (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Additional controls*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Second shift | -0.059 | 0.152 | 0.942 | 0.028 | 0.143 | 1.029 | 0.030 | 0.143 | 1.030 |
| Third shift | -0.275 | 0.161 | 0.760 | -0.307 | 0.166 | 0.735 | -0.308 | 0.170 | 0.735 |
| First shift (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Weekday | 0.052 | 0.118 | 1.053 | 0.080 | 0.119 | 1.083 | 0.072 | 0.116 | 1.074 |
| Weekend (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Attempted | -0.474*** | 0.134 | 0.622*** | -0.599*** | 0.157 | 0.549*** | -0.577*** | 0.157 | 0.561*** |
| Completed (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Domestic | 1.030*** | 0.239 | 2.801*** | 0.768** | 0.260 | 2.156** | 0.770** | 0.259 | 2.160** |
| Not domestic (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Justice system action*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Witness | -0.012 | 0.195 | 0.988 | -0.090 | 0.238 | 0.914 | -0.090 | 0.241 | 0.914 |
| No witness (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Neighborhood characteristics*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Concentrated disadvantage | -0.023 | 0.057 | 0.977 | -0.003 | 0.086 | 0.997 | -0.003 | 0.086 | 0.997 |
| Percent Black | -0.001 | 0.003 | 0.999 | -0.002 | 0.004 | 0.998 | -0.002 | 0.004 | 0.998 |
| Population | 0.035 | 0.108 | 1.035 | 0.056 | 0.079 | 1.058 | 0.056 | 0.086 | 1.057 |
| Cross-classified | 0.035 | 0.055 | 1.036 | 0.080 | 0.057 | 1.084 | 0.075 | 0.057 | 1.078 |
| Not cross-classified (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Neighborhood crime | 0.003 | 0.003 | 1.003 | 0.002 | 0.004 | 1.002 | 0.002 | 0.004 | 1.002 |
| ***Police district characteristics*** | | | | | | | | | |
| District crime | -1.224 | 3.017 | 0.294 | 0.926 | 3.974 | 2.525 | 1.159 | 3.906 | 3.188 |
| Detective workload | 0.007 | 0.022 | 1.007 | 0.000 | 0.030 | 0.991 | -0.011 | 0.029 | 0.989 |
| Constant | -1.574* | 0.684 | 0.207* | -0.959 | 0.599 | 0.383 | -1.904** | 0.668 | 0.149** |

* indicates p < .05, ** indicates p < .01, *** indicates p < .001

Model 13. L1 *N* = 2,854 offenses; L2 *N* = 332 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

Model 14. L1 *N* = 2,167 offenses; L2 *N* = 322 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

Model 15. L1 *N* = 2,167 offenses; L2 *N* = 322 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

### 6.1.6 MODERATION EFFECTS

Interaction terms are added to the next set of models to demonstrate the working conceptualization's utility, and to assess whether case solvability (measured by victim-suspect relationship) and/or case devaluation (measured by crime type) moderate the effects of race on clearance. Significant negative interactive coefficients between victim race and stranger relationships would demonstrate that crimes with Black victims (alone and in combination with Black suspects in racial dyad models) are particularly unlikely to be cleared when they involve stranger relationships (*H4*). Additionally, crime severity is expected to augment the relationship between race and case clearance. More specifically, while clearance rates are expected to be lower for Black assault victims relative to White assault victims, no racial differences are expected in homicide clearances, as such cases garner greater prioritization by the police (*H5*).

*Victim Race and Victim-Suspect Relationship*

First, an interaction term is added to the full victim, victim-suspect, and victim-suspect racial dyad clearance models (Table 39, Models 16-18) to determine whether victim-offender relationships moderate the relationship between race of victim and crime clearance (Mouzos & Muller, 2001). In the victim and victim-suspect models, interaction terms represent the interaction between Black victim race and stranger relationship. In the victim-suspect racial dyad model, the interaction term represents the interaction between Black victims with Black stranger suspects. Note that across interaction models, within family victim-suspect relationship is the reference category to allow for the accurate

analysis of stranger relationships. In the racial dyad model, the WvBs racial dyad replaces the BvBs category as the reference category.

Across models, clear support is provided for H4, and the notion that the effects of victim race on clearance are moderated by victim-suspect relationship. The results from Models 16 and 17 indicate significant negative interactions between Black victim and stranger victim-suspect relationship (Model 16: Exp(B) = 0.49, *ß* = -0.71, $p < 0.001$; Model 17: Exp(B) = 0.38, *ß* = -0.97, $p < 0.001$). Likelihood of case clearance reduces by approximately 51 percent for Model 16, and when information on suspects are included in the model, clearance reduces by 62 percent (Model 17). The results from the victim-suspect racial dyad model (Model 18) demonstrate that cases involving Black victims and suspects are particularly unlikely to be cleared when they involve strangers (Exp(B) = 0.39, *ß* = -0.94, $p < 0.001$).

The predicted odds of clearance from Model 16, the most reliable model of clearance, are calculated using STATA's *margins* command to demonstrate the relationship between victim-suspect relationships, clearance, and victim race. Predicted margins with 95% confidence intervals are presented in Figure 5. The results demonstrate that among cases involving Black victims, stranger relationships significantly reduce the likelihood of crime clearance. Specifically, for cases involving Black victims, the odds of crime clearance are 10.54 times greater in within family relationship cases compared to stranger relationships. For cases involving White victims, the odds of clearance are three times greater for within family cases compared to stranger ones. Black victims and White victims do not experience significant differences in clearance odds for cases involving within family relationships.

**Table 39. Logistic regressions examining the interaction of victim race and victim-suspect relationship for violent crime clearance in St. Louis, MO (2015)**

| | MODEL 16 Victim, Case, Neighborhood, and Police District Factors | | | MODEL 17 Victim, Suspect, Case, Neighborhood, and Police District Factors | | | MODEL 18 Victim, Suspect, Case, Neighborhood, and Police District Factors w/ Racial Dyads | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** |
| ***Victim characteristics*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Male victim(s) | -0.293** | 0.111 | 0.746** | -0.270* | 0.11 | 0.763* | -0.262* | 0.113 | 0.770* |
| Male and female victims | -0.207 | 0.214 | 0.813 | -0.100 | 0.281 | 0.905 | -0.106 | 0.277 | 0.900 |
| Female victim(s) (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Black victim(s) | -0.054 | 0.238 | 0.947 | 0.255 | 0.282 | 1.290 | | | |
| Black and White victims | 0.120 | 0.137 | 1.127 | 0.248 | 0.288 | 1.281 | | | |
| White victim(s) (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | | | |
| Non-Hispanic victim(s) | 0.612* | 0.258 | 1.845* | 0.747*** | 0.173 | 2.111*** | 0.754*** | 0.163 | 2.126*** |
| Hispanic victim(s) (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Victim age | 0.012 | 0.024 | 1.013 | 0.008 | 0.011 | 1.008 | 0.008 | 0.011 | 1.008 |
| Victim age squared | -0.000 | 0.000 | 1.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 1.000 | -0.000 | 0.000 | 1.000 |
| Victims of multiple ages | 0.047 | 0.265 | 1.102 | 0.017 | 0.317 | 1.017 | 0.0213 | 0.314 | 1.022 |
| Victim(s) of single age (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Suspect characteristics*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Male suspect(s) | | | | 0.001 | 0.092 | 1.001 | 0.006 | 0.091 | 1.006 |
| Male and female suspects | | | | 0.080 | 0.215 | 1.084 | 0.098 | 0.217 | 1.103 |
| Female suspect(s) (reference) | | | | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Black suspect(s) | | | | -0.706*** | 0.137 | 0.494*** | | | |
| Black and White suspects | | | | -0.595 | 0.712 | 0.552 | | | |
| White suspect(s) (reference) | | | | – | – | – | | | |
| Non-Hispanic suspect(s) | | | | 0.687 | 0.371 | 1.987 | 0.665* | 0.296 | 1.944* |
| Hispanic suspect (reference) | | | | – | – | – | | | |
| Suspect age | | | | -0.021 | 0.024 | 0.979 | -0.020 | 0.024 | 0.98 |
| Suspect age squared | | | | 0.000 | 0.000 | 1.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 1.000 |
| Suspects of multiple ages | | | | 0.551* | 0.243 | 1.735* | 0.558* | 0.252 | 1.748* |
| Suspect(s) of single age (reference) | | | | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Victim-suspect racial dyads*** | | | | | | | | | |

| **Table 39 (continued)** | **MODEL 16** | | | **MODEL 17** | | | **MODEL 18** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** |
| WvWs | | | | | | | 0.651*** | 0.156 | 1.918*** |
| MvMs | | | | | | | 0.676 | 0.945 | 1.966 |
| BvWs | | | | | | | 0.482 | 0.347 | 1.62 |
| BvMs | | | | | | | 0.355 | 0.859 | 1.426 |
| BvBs | | | | | | | 0.201 | 0.295 | 1.222 |
| WvMs | | | | | | | -0.598 | 1.107 | 0.55 |
| MvBs | | | | | | | 0.176 | 0.331 | 1.193 |
| MvWs | | | | | | | 0.685 | 0.755 | 1.983 |
| WvBs (reference) | | | | | | | – | – | – |
| ***Most serious crime type*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Homicide | 1.546* | 0.599 | 4.692* | 1.337* | 0.588 | 3.809* | 1.327* | 0.598 | 3.769* |
| Robbery | -0.310*** | 0.054 | 0.734*** | -0.090 | 0.105 | 0.914 | -0.098 | 0.106 | 0.907 |
| Rape | -0.486 | 0.297 | 0.615 | -0.700*** | 0.168 | 0.497*** | -0.697*** | 0.165 | 0.498*** |
| Assault (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Charge and person counts*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Number of charges | 0.436*** | 0.046 | 1.547*** | 0.398*** | 0.068 | 1.489*** | 0.403*** | 0.071 | 1.496*** |
| Number of victims | -0.059 | 0.055 | 0.942 | -0.052 | 0.070 | 0.949 | -0.053 | 0.069 | 0.948 |
| Number of suspects | 0.164 | 0.083 | 1.178 | -0.052 | 0.138 | 0.95 | -0.044 | 0.14 | 0.957 |
| ***Weapon type(s)*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Firearm | -0.300** | 0.099 | 0.742** | -0.264 | 0.182 | 0.768 | -0.257 | 0.179 | 0.773 |
| Knife | 0.258 | 0.171 | 1.294 | 0.207 | 0.200 | 1.229 | 0.21 | 0.193 | 1.233 |
| Unknown/other weapon | -0.858 | 0.606 | 0.424 | -0.954 | 0.555 | 0.385 | -0.941 | 0.549 | 0.39 |
| Multiple weapon types | 0.212 | 0.229 | 1.237 | 0.413 | 0.23 | 1.512 | 0.403 | 0.234 | 1.496 |
| No weapon | 0.009 | 0.210 | 1.009 | 0.102 | 0.259 | 1.107 | 0.089 | 0.258 | 1.093 |
| Personal weapon (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Victim injury*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Minor injury | -0.197 | 0.105 | 0.821 | -0.228 | 0.145 | 0.796 | -0.225 | 0.146 | 0.799 |
| Major injury | 0.358** | 0.123 | 1.430** | 0.289 | 0.194 | 1.335 | 0.29 | 0.194 | 1.336 |
| Multiple injury types | 0.116 | 0.315 | 1.122 | -0.015 | 0.361 | 0.985 | -0.0103 | 0.368 | 0.99 |
| No/unknown injury (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Victim-suspect relationship (VSR)*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Stranger | -0.341 | 0.201 | 0.711 | 0.003 | 0.248 | 1.003 | -0.034 | 0.256 | 0.966 |
| Outside of family | 0.663*** | 0.171 | 1.941*** | 0.641*** | 0.182 | 1.898*** | 0.646*** | 0.185 | 1.908*** |
| Other relationship | -1.160 | 1.215 | 0.314 | -1.788 | 1.003 | 0.167 | -1.792 | 1.016 | 0.167 |
| Unknown relationship | -1.738*** | 0.143 | 0.176*** | -1.094*** | 0.154 | 0.335*** | -1.099*** | 0.153 | 0.333*** |

**Table 39 (continued)**

| | MODEL 16 | | | MODEL 17 | | | MODEL 18 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** |
| Relationship not applicable | 0.579 | 0.364 | 1.784 | 0.509* | 0.259 | 1.663* | 0.508 | 0.264 | 1.663 |
| Multiple relationships | -0.308 | 0.240 | 0.735 | -0.374 | 0.211 | 0.688 | -0.385 | 0.207 | 0.68 |
| Within family (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Additional controls*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Second shift | -0.088 | 0.151 | 0.915 | -0.001 | 0.14 | 0.999 | -0.003 | 0.138 | 0.997 |
| Third shift | -0.286 | 0.171 | 0.751* | -0.315 | 0.174 | 0.730 | -0.320 | 0.180 | 0.726 |
| First shift (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Weekday | 0.042 | 0.083 | 1.043 | 0.0723 | 0.119 | 1.075 | 0.071 | 0.116 | 1.073 |
| Weekend (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Attempted | -0.469** | 0.141 | 0.625** | -0.647*** | 0.174 | 0.524*** | -0.621*** | 0.171 | 0.537*** |
| Completed (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Domestic | 1.192*** | 0.250 | 3.295*** | 0.889*** | 0.251 | 2.434*** | 0.891*** | 0.251 | 2.438*** |
| Not domestic (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Justice system action*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Witness | -0.012 | 0.201 | 0.988 | -0.096 | 0.227 | 0.909 | -0.102 | 0.231 | 0.903 |
| No witness (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Neighborhood characteristics*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Concentrated disadvantage | -0.027 | 0.057 | 0.974 | -0.007 | 0.089 | 0.993 | -0.005 | 0.090 | 0.995 |
| Percent Black | -0.002 | 0.003 | 0.998 | -0.002 | 0.004 | 0.998 | -0.002 | 0.004 | 0.998 |
| Population | 0.037 | 0.104 | 1.038 | 0.064 | 0.080 | 1.066 | 0.066 | 0.086 | 1.069 |
| Cross-classified | 0.058 | 0.046 | 1.060 | 0.095 | 0.051 | 1.099 | 0.088 | 0.049 | 1.092 |
| Not cross-classified (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Neighborhood crime | 0.002 | 0.003 | 1.002 | 0.002 | 0.004 | 1.002 | 0.002 | 0.004 | 1.002 |
| ***Police district characteristics*** | | | | | | | | | |
| District crime | -0.972 | 3.081 | 0.378 | 1.126 | 4.015 | 3.084 | 1.261 | 3.965 | 3.53 |
| Detective workload | 0.005 | 0.022 | 1.005 | -0.011 | 0.03 | 0.990 | -0.011 | 0.029 | 0.989 |
| ***Interacting race and VSR*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Black victim X Stranger | -0.706*** | 0.140 | 0.493*** | -0.969*** | 0.154 | 0.380*** | | | |
| BvBs X Stranger | | | | | | | -0.940*** | 0.157 | 0.391*** |
| Constant | -0.896 | 0.598 | 0.408 | -0.465 | 0.61 | 0.628 | -1.175 | 0.719 | 0.309 |

* indicates p < .05, ** indicates p < .01, *** indicates p < .001

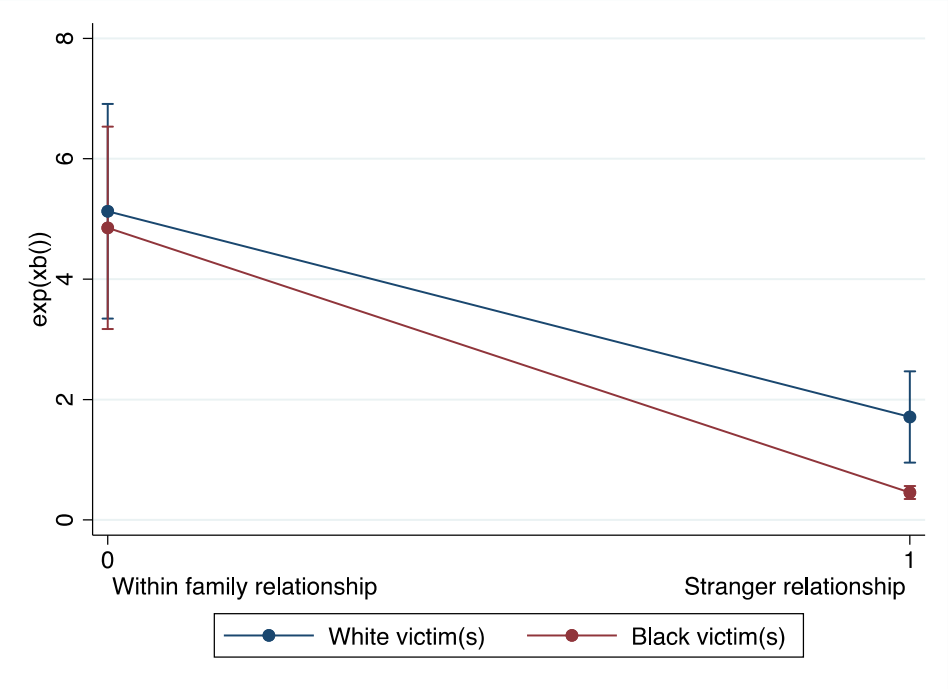
Model 16. L1 *N* = 2,854 offenses; L2 *N* = 332 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

Model 17. L1 *N* = 2,167 offenses; L2 *N* = 322 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

Model 18. L1 *N* = 2,167 offenses; L2 *N* = 322 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

In Model 16, the addition of the interaction term does not result in additional changes to coefficients. In Models 17 and 18, homicide crimes emerge as significant indicators of clearance in expected ways, demonstrating that the likelihood of a case being solved increases for homicides when accounting for the interaction between race and victim-suspect relationships. In other words, failure to account for victim-offender relationships may obscure some of the racial differences in clearance. In Model 18, the inclusion of the interaction term results in non-Hispanic suspects' cases becoming significantly more likely to be cleared than ones involving Hispanic suspects, suggesting that Hispanics may be less, rather than more, punitively treated than their non-Hispanic counterparts.

**Figure 5. The relationship between victim-suspect relationship and case clearance, by victim race**



*Victim Race and Crime Type*

As noted in Chapter 3, recent attention has been devoted to the low clearance rates of nonfatal robberies and assaults (Dean, 2019; Ryley et al., 2019). The case devaluation hypothesis assumes that victims will not be devalued when serious crimes, such as homicides, are committed because the police are pressured to clear such crimes (Bynum et al., 1982; Gottfredson & Hindelang, 1979). But in victim models shown throughout the dissertation, the significant relationship between victim race and clearance, and the positive and significant relationship between homicide and clearance, bring this hypothesis into question.

Interactions between victim race and crime type are added to full models to determine whether crime type moderates the relationship between victim race and clearance (Table 40, Models 19-21). Specifically, in victim and victim-suspect models, interaction terms model Black victim and homicide crimes, while the victim-suspect racial dyad includes an interaction between Black victims and suspects and homicide. In the racial dyad model, the WvBs racial dyad replaces the BvBs category as the reference category to allow for accurate analysis. Assaults are the reference group for the homicide dummy variable.

Interactions are non-significant across models, suggesting that crime type does not attenuate the relationship between victim race and crime clearance. Further, the main effects of homicide are non-significant across models, and Black victim race (alone and with Black suspects) is non-significant when accounting for suspect information and suspect dyads (Model 20 and Model 21).

**Table 40. Logistic regressions examining the interaction of victim race and crime type for violent crime clearance in St. Louis, MO (2015)**

| | MODEL 19 Victim, Case, Neighborhood, and Police District Factors | | | MODEL 20 Victim, Suspect, Case, Neighborhood, and Police District Factors | | | MODEL 21 Victim, Suspect, Case, Neighborhood, and Police District Factors w/ Racial Dyads | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** |
| ***Victim characteristics*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Male victim(s) | -0.296** | 0.110 | 0.744** | -0.271* | 0.107 | 0.763* | -0.271* | 0.108 | 0.762* |
| Male and female victims | -0.219 | 0.193 | 0.803 | -0.132 | 0.256 | 0.877 | -0.145 | 0.254 | 0.865 |
| Female victim(s) (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Black victim(s) | -0.494* | 0.197 | 0.610* | -0.377 | 0.233 | 0.686 | | | |
| Black and White victims | 0.122 | 0.125 | 1.13 | 0.17 | 0.308 | 1.185 | | | |
| White victim(s) (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | | | |
| Non-Hispanic victim(s) | 0.654* | 0.285 | 1.923* | 0.815*** | 0.235 | 2.259*** | 0.792*** | 0.218 | 2.207*** |
| Hispanic victim(s) (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Victim age | 0.019 | 0.024 | 1.019 | 0.013 | 0.011 | 1.013 | 0.013 | 0.011 | 1.013 |
| Victim age squared | -0.000 | 0.000 | 1.000 | -0.000 | 0.000 | 1.000 | -0.000 | 0.000 | 1.000 |
| Victims of multiple ages | 0.047 | 0.244 | 1.048 | -0.021 | 0.324 | 0.979 | -0.017 | 0.324 | 0.983 |
| Victim(s) of single age (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Suspect characteristics*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Male suspect(s) | | | | 0.046 | 0.097 | 1.047 | 0.047 | 0.098 | 1.048 |
| Male and female suspects | | | | 0.142 | 0.235 | 1.152 | 0.167 | 0.240 | 1.181 |
| Female suspect(s) (reference) | | | | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Black suspect(s) | | | | -0.500*** | 0.144 | 0.607*** | | | |
| Black and White suspects | | | | -0.484 | 0.756 | 0.616 | | | |
| White suspect(s) (reference) | | | | – | – | – | | | |
| Non-Hispanic suspect(s) | | | | 0.643 | 0.421 | 1.902 | 0.678 | 0.369 | 1.969 |
| Hispanic suspect(s) (reference) | | | | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Suspect age | | | | -0.018 | 0.023 | 0.982 | -0.018 | 0.022 | 0.982 |
| Suspect age squared | | | | 0.000 | 0.000 | 1.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 1.000 |
| Suspects of multiple ages | | | | 0.583* | 0.250 | 1.792* | 0.598* | 0.254 | 1.818* |
| Suspect(s) of single age (reference) | | | | – | – | – | – | – | – |

| **Table 40 (continued)** | **MODEL 19** | | | **MODEL 20** | | | **MODEL 21** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** |
| ***Victim-suspect racial dyads*** | | | | | | | | | |
| WvWs | | | | | | | 0.409* | 0.172 | 1.506* |
| MvMs | | | | | | | 0.423 | 0.878 | 1.526 |
| BvWs | | | | | | | 0.397 | 0.346 | 1.488 |
| BvMs | | | | | | | 0.019 | 0.790 | 1.019 |
| BvBs | | | | | | | -0.428 | 0.238 | 0.652 |
| WvMs | | | | | | | -0.779 | 1.249 | 0.459 |
| MvBs | | | | | | | 0.090 | 0.341 | 1.094 |
| MvWs | | | | | | | 0.584 | 0.728 | 1.793 |
| WvBs (reference) | | | | | | | – | – | – |
| ***Most serious crime type*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Homicide | 0.350 | 1.658 | 1.418 | 0.440 | 1.617 | 1.553 | 0.403 | 1.642 | 1.496 |
| Robbery | -0.244*** | 0.063 | 0.783*** | -0.059 | 0.112 | 0.943 | -0.066 | 0.115 | 0.936 |
| Rape | -0.517 | 0.304 | 0.596 | -0.725*** | 0.172 | 0.484*** | -0.716*** | 0.172 | 0.489*** |
| Assault (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Charge and person counts*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Number of charges | 0.423*** | 0.049 | 1.527*** | 0.386*** | 0.066 | 1.471*** | 0.392*** | 0.069 | 1.479*** |
| Number of victims | -0.065 | 0.058 | 0.937 | -0.06 | 0.073 | 0.942 | -0.059 | 0.072 | 0.943 |
| Number of suspects | 0.171 | 0.097 | 1.187 | -0.053 | 0.146 | 0.949 | -0.045 | 0.149 | 0.956 |
| ***Weapon type(s)*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Firearm | -0.317** | 0.102 | 0.728** | -0.278 | 0.185 | 0.757 | -0.278 | 0.181 | 0.757 |
| Knife | 0.230 | 0.176 | 1.258 | 0.217 | 0.204 | 1.243 | 0.223 | 0.202 | 1.250 |
| Unknown/other weapon | -0.949 | 0.616 | 0.387 | -1.035 | 0.581 | 0.355 | -1.019 | 0.579 | 0.361 |
| Multiple weapon types | 0.216 | 0.228 | 1.241 | 0.452* | 0.226 | 1.572* | 0.436 | 0.231 | 1.546 |
| No weapon | 0.008 | 0.234 | 1.008 | 0.085 | 0.283 | 1.088 | 0.071 | 0.288 | 1.073 |
| Personal weapon (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Victim injury*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Minor injury | -0.199 | 0.112 | 0.820 | -0.222 | 0.148 | 0.801 | -0.216 | 0.148 | 0.806 |
| Major injury | 0.377*** | 0.110 | 1.457*** | 0.293 | 0.182 | 1.341 | 0.302 | 0.180 | 1.353 |
| Multiple injury types | -0.007 | 0.420 | 0.993 | -0.159 | 0.452 | 0.853 | -0.148 | 0.452 | 0.862 |
| No/unknown injury (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Victim-suspect relationship*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Within family | 1.446*** | 0.133 | 4.247*** | 1.183*** | 0.25 | 3.265*** | 1.198*** | 0.244 | 3.312*** |
| Outside of family | 1.523*** | 0.178 | 4.585*** | 1.355*** | 0.184 | 3.877*** | 1.365*** | 0.186 | 3.917*** |
| Other relationship | -0.676 | 1.234 | 0.508 | -1.355 | 1.076 | 0.258 | -1.346 | 1.087 | 0.260 |

| **Table 40 (continued)** | **MODEL 19** | | | **MODEL 20** | | | **MODEL 21** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** |
| Unknown relationship | -0.988*** | 0.083 | 0.372*** | -0.506*** | 0.068 | 0.603*** | -0.497*** | 0.066 | 0.608*** |
| Relationship not applicable | 0.858** | 0.309 | 2.358** | 0.737** | 0.255 | 2.089** | 0.746** | 0.26 | 2.109** |
| Multiple relationships | 0.382 | 0.231 | 1.466 | 0.192 | 0.229 | 1.212 | 0.177 | 0.231 | 1.194 |
| Stranger (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Additional controls*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Second shift | -0.0596 | 0.153 | 0.942 | 0.028 | 0.142 | 1.028 | 0.029 | 0.142 | 1.030 |
| Third shift | -0.275 | 0.163 | 0.759 | -0.307 | 0.167 | 0.735 | -0.308 | 0.172 | 0.735 |
| First shift (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Weekday | 0.052 | 0.120 | 1.054 | 0.080 | 0.120 | 1.083 | 0.072 | 0.116 | 1.074 |
| Weekend (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Attempted | -0.475*** | 0.134 | 0.622*** | -0.601*** | 0.158 | 0.548*** | -0.579*** | 0.159 | 0.561*** |
| Completed (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Domestic | 1.031*** | 0.24 | 2.804*** | 0.770** | 0.261 | 2.159** | 0.771** | 0.260 | 2.162** |
| Not domestic (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Justice system action*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Witness | 0.002 | 0.209 | 1.002 | -0.076 | 0.254 | 0.927 | -0.076 | 0.256 | 0.927 |
| No witness (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Neighborhood characteristics*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Concentrated disadvantage | -0.023 | 0.057 | 0.978 | -0.002 | 0.086 | 0.998 | -0.003 | 0.086 | 0.997 |
| Percent Black | -0.002 | 0.003 | 0.999 | -0.002 | 0.004 | 0.998 | -0.002 | 0.004 | 0.998 |
| Population | 0.033 | 0.11 | 1.033 | 0.054 | 0.080 | 1.055 | 0.054 | 0.087 | 1.055 |
| Cross-classified | 0.035 | 0.054 | 1.035 | 0.079 | 0.054 | 1.082 | 0.074 | 0.053 | 1.076 |
| Not cross-classified (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Neighborhood crime | 0.003 | 0.003 | 1.003 | 0.002 | 0.004 | 1.002 | 0.002 | 0.004 | 1.002 |
| ***Police district characteristics*** | | | | | | | | | |
| District crime | -1.265 | 3.085 | 0.282 | 0.885 | 4.053 | 2.422 | 1.118 | 3.979 | 3.060 |
| Detective workload | 0.007 | 0.022 | 1.007 | -0.009 | 0.030 | 0.991 | -0.011 | 0.030 | 0.990 |
| ***Interacting race and crime type*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Black victim X Homicide | 1.285 | 2.714 | 3.615 | 1.022 | 2.542 | 2.779 | | | |
| BvBs X Homicide | | | | | | | 1.054 | 2.559 | 2.868 |
| Constant | -1.567* | 0.689 | 0.209* | -0.948 | 0.597 | 0.388 | -1.466* | 0.701 | 0.231* |

* indicates p < .05, ** indicates p < .01, *** indicates p < .001

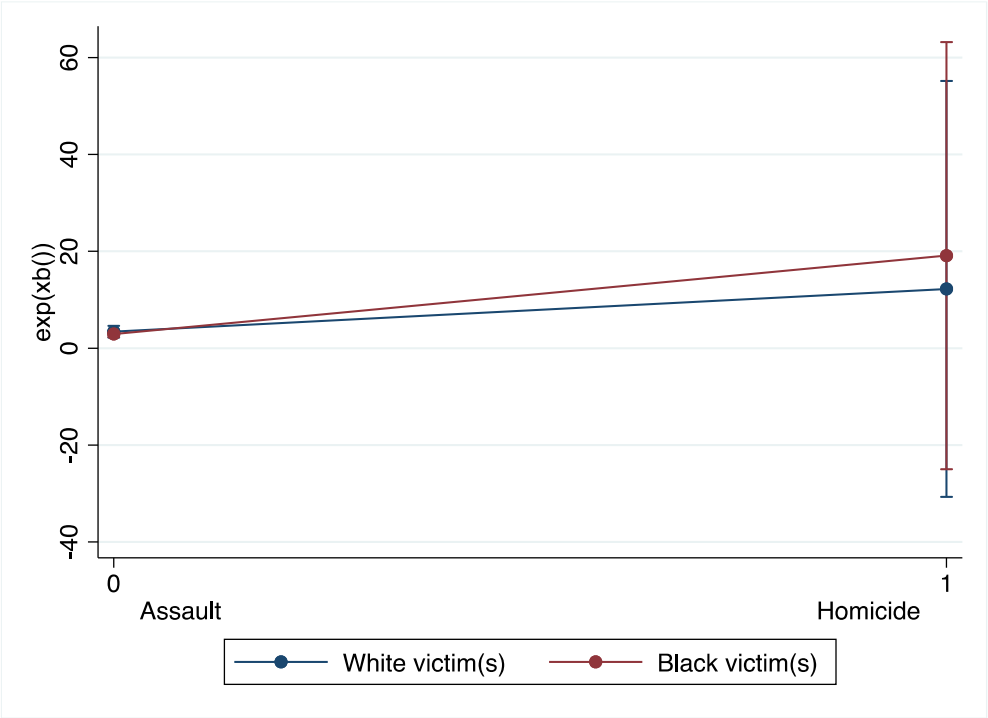
Model 19. L1 *N* = 2,854 offenses; L2 *N* = 332 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

Model 20. L1 *N* = 2,167 offenses; L2 *N* = 322 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

Model 21. L1 *N* = 2,167 offenses; L2 *N* = 322 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

It is useful to compare the clearance odds for homicides and assaults involving Black victims and White victims. Predicted margins with 95% confidence intervals are calculated using the results from Model 19 (see Figure 6). The results indicate that for cases involving Black victims, the odds of clearance are 4.37 times greater for homicides than assaults, and for cases involving White victims, the ratio of the two odds is 1.96, but the interaction effects are non-significant and the large confidence intervals for homicide indicate issues relating to small sample size.

**Figure 6. The relationship between crime type and case clearance, by victim race**



## 6.2 CASE REFUSAL

### 6.2.1 EXAMINING RACE

Table 41 presents coefficients (ß), robust standard errors (SE), and odds ratios (OR) for case refusal using race of victim and suspects as predictor variables. The results from Model 22 are in line with *H1B*, demonstrating that cases involving Black victims are over two times more likely than ones involving White victims to be refused for prosecution (Exp(B)= 2.32, *ß* = 0.84, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that Black victim neglect may begin in the prosecutor's office. In line with the clearance results, cases involving both Black and White victims appear to be more likely than White-victim only cases to be prioritized by the CAO, with such cases having significantly lower odds of case refusal (Exp(B)= 0.50, *ß* = -0.70, $p < 0.001$).

When suspect race is included in the model (Model 23), the positive effect of Black victim race on case refusal becomes larger (Exp(B)= 2.87, *ß* = 1.05, $p < 0.001$), and cases involving White and Black victims remain significantly more likely to be prosecuted (i.e., less likely to be refused) than ones involving White victims (Exp(B)= 0.54, *ß* = -0.61, $p < 0.01$). In line with *H2B*, Black suspects are significantly more likely to be prosecuted than White suspects (Exp(B)= 0.61, *ß* = -0.50, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that the disproportionate punishment of Black suspects may also begin in the prosecutor's office.

Each victim-suspect racial dyad in the dyad model (Model 24) is negatively associated with case refusal in comparison to cases involving Black victims and suspects,

**Table 41. Logistic regressions examining race and violent crime case refusal in St. Louis, MO (2015)**

| | MODEL 22 Victim Race | | | MODEL 23 Victim and Suspect Race | | | MODEL 24 Victim-Suspect Racial Dyads | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** |
| ***Victim characteristics*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Black victim(s) | 0.840*** | 0.174 | 2.317*** | 1.053*** | 0.180 | 2.865*** | | | |
| Black and White victims | -0.704*** | 0.148 | 0.495*** | -0.610** | 0.195 | 0.543** | | | |
| White victim(s) (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | | | |
| ***Suspect characteristics*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Black suspect(s) | | | | -0.500** | 0.172 | 0.606** | | | |
| Black and White suspects | | | | 0.189 | 0.347 | 1.208 | | | |
| White suspect(s) (reference) | | | | – | – | – | | | |
| ***Victim-suspect racial dyads*** | | | | | | | | | |
| WvWs | | | | | | | -0.408* | 0.173 | 0.665* |
| MvMs | | | | | | | -0.513 | 0.657 | 0.599 |
| BvWs | | | | | | | -0.376 | 0.431 | 0.687 |
| BvMs | | | | | | | – | – | – |
| WvBs | | | | | | | -1.155*** | 0.155 | 0.315*** |
| WvMs | | | | | | | -1.656* | 0.769 | 0.191* |
| MvBs | | | | | | | -1.624*** | 0.137 | 0.197*** |
| MvWs | | | | | | | -2.555 | 1.344 | 0.078 |
| BvBs (reference) | | | | | | | – | – | – |
| Constant | -0.115 | 0.159 | 0.892 | 0.156 | 0.126 | 1.169 | 0.725*** | 0.125 | 2.064*** |

* indicates p < .05, ** indicates p < .01, *** indicates p < .001

Model 22. L1 *N* = 1,411 offenses; L2 *N* = 303 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

Model 23. L1 *N* = 1,411 offenses; L2 *N* = 303 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

Model 24. L1 *N* = 1,406 offenses; L2 *N* = 303 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

suggesting support for devaluation. In line with expectations, cases involving White victims and suspects are significantly more likely to be prosecuted than Black victim and suspect cases, and this effect size is smaller than for most other dyads (Exp(B)= 0.67, *ß* = -0.41, $p < 0.01$). Further, cases involving Black suspects and White victims (on their own and in combination with Black victims) have high likelihoods of case acceptance, suggesting that White victims' cases are taken seriously when offended against by one or more Black suspects. Black victims' cases appear to be taken more seriously than Black victim-suspect cases when they involve White victims and Black suspects (Exp(B)= 0.20, *ß* = -1.62, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that the presence of White victims deters Black victim neglect. While cases involving Black and White victims and White suspects (alone or in combination with Black suspects) also have negative relationships to case refusal, the effects are non-significant. Importantly for the current study, cases involving Black victims and White suspects are not significantly more likely to be refused than cases involving Black victims and suspects, suggesting that cases involving Black victims are disproportionately neglected by the prosecutors regardless of suspect race.[65]

### 6.2.2 EXAMINING PERSON DEVALUATION

Black victim race continues to be a significant predictor of case refusal in Model 25, which examines victim characteristics in relation to prosecutorial case refusal (see Table 42). In line with *H1B*, cases involving Black victims have odds of refusal that are over twice ones involving White victims (Exp(B)= 2.37, *ß* = 0.86, $p < 0.001$). When

[65] Because all five cases involving Black victims and Black and White suspects are refused for prosecution, this racial dyad category is omitted from the analysis.

**Table 42. Logistic regressions examining person characteristics and violent crime case refusal in St. Louis, MO (2015)**

| | MODEL 25 Victim Factors | | | MODEL 26 Victim and Suspect Factors | | | MODEL 27 Victim and Suspect Factors w/ Racial Dyads | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** |
| ***Victim characteristics*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Male victim(s) | -0.044 | 0.162 | 0.957 | -0.049 | 0.127 | 0.952 | -0.030 | 0.126 | 0.971 |
| Male and female victims | -0.208 | 0.216 | 0.812 | -0.225 | 0.247 | 0.798 | -0.237 | 0.236 | 0.789 |
| Female victim(s) (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Black victim(s) | 0.863*** | 0.187 | 2.369*** | 1.095*** | 0.222 | 2.989*** | | | |
| Black and White victims | -0.507* | 0.203 | 0.602* | -0.324 | 0.234 | 0.723 | | | |
| White victim(s) (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | | | |
| Non-Hispanic victim(s) | -0.308 | 0.577 | 0.735 | -1.768* | 0.886 | 0.171* | -1.638* | 0.811 | 0.194* |
| Hispanic victim(s) (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Victim age | 0.022 | 0.024 | 1.022 | 0.0154 | 0.028 | 1.016 | 0.019 | 0.028 | 1.019 |
| Victim age squared | -0.000 | 0.000 | 1.000 | -0.000 | 0.000 | 1.000 | -0.000 | 0.000 | 1.000 |
| Victims of multiple ages | -0.406 | 0.237 | 0.666 | -0.316 | 0.241 | 0.729 | -0.32 | 0.242 | 0.726 |
| Victim(s) of single age (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Suspect characteristics*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Male suspect(s) | | | | -0.561*** | 0.154 | 0.570*** | -0.560*** | 0.157 | 0.571*** |
| Male and female suspects | | | | 0.022 | 0.248 | 1.022 | 0.053 | 0.256 | 1.054 |
| Female suspect(s) (reference) | | | | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Black suspect(s) | | | | -0.748** | 0.234 | 0.473** | | | |
| Black and White suspects | | | | -0.480 | 0.421 | 0.619 | | | |
| White suspect(s) (reference) | | | | – | – | – | | | |
| Non-Hispanic suspect(s) | | | | 3.152*** | 0.800 | 23.370*** | 2.975*** | 0.798 | 19.590*** |
| Hispanic suspect(s) (reference) | | | | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Suspect age | | | | 0.069 | 0.043 | 1.071 | 0.073 | 0.045 | 1.075 |
| Suspect age squared | | | | -0.001 | 0.001 | 0.999 | -0.001 | 0.001 | 0.999 |
| Suspects of multiple ages | | | | -0.147 | 0.234 | 0.863 | -0.078 | 0.213 | 0.925 |
| Suspect(s) of single age (reference) | | | | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Victim-suspect racial dyads*** | | | | | | | | | |
| WvWs | | | | | | | -0.230 | 0.182 | 0.794 |
| MvMs | | | | | | | -0.719 | 0.730 | 0.487 |

**Table 42 (continued)**

| | MODEL 25 | | | MODEL 26 | | | MODEL 27 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** |
| BvWs | | | | | | | -0.111 | 0.532 | 0.895 |
| BvMs | | | | | | | – | – | – |
| WvBs | | | | | | | -1.159*** | 0.191 | 0.314*** |
| WvMs | | | | | | | – | – | – |
| MvBs | | | | | | | -1.447*** | 0.170 | 0.235*** |
| MvWs | | | | | | | -1.615 | 1.482 | 0.199 |
| BvBs (reference) | | | | | | | – | – | – |
| Constant | -0.018 | 0.643 | 0.982 | -1.824 | 1.403 | 0.161 | -1.549 | 1.448 | 0.212 |

* indicates p < .05, ** indicates p < .01, *** indicates p < .001

Model 25. L1 *N* = 1,366 offenses; L2 *N* = 301 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

Model 26. L1 *N* = 1,336 offenses; L2 *N* = 299 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

Model 27. L1 *N* = 1,328 offenses; L2 *N* = 299 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

victim predictors are added to the race-only model, cases involving both Black and White victims continue to have lower odds of case refusal than cases involving White victims, and no other victim indicators significantly influence the refusal of cases.

Model 26, which adds suspect demographic characteristics to the victim characteristics model, finds similar relationships between victim characteristics and case refusal, with the exception of non-Hispanic victims becoming significantly less likely to have their cases refused for prosecution (Exp(B)= 0.17, *ß* = -1.77, $p < 0.05$), which is in line with the victim neglect thesis. As was the case in Model 23 and in line with *H2B*, cases involving Black suspects have significantly lower odds of refusal than ones involving White suspects (Exp(B)= 0.47, *ß* = -0.75, $p < 0.01$). When controlling for suspect characteristics, cases involving White and Black victims are no longer significantly more likely to be accepted for prosecution than ones involving White victims.

Suspect sex and ethnicity emerge as significant predictors of case refusal in important ways. In line with Black's devaluation thesis, but in contrast to clearance models, cases involving male suspects appear to be more harshly punished (i.e., accepted for prosecution) than ones involving female suspects (Exp(B)= 0.57, *ß* = -0.56, $p < 0.001$). In line with the notion that people of color are more harshly punished by criminal justice systems, and in line with clearance models, cases involving Hispanic suspects are found to be more likely than non-Hispanic suspects' cases to be prosecuted. Specifically, the odds of case refusal for non-Hispanic suspects are 23.37 times as large as the odds of refusal for Hispanic suspects, suggesting severe ethnic disparities in prosecution (*ß* = 3.15, $p < 0.001$).

Model 27 includes victim and suspect characteristics and measures victim and suspect race using racial dyad categories. Similar to Model 24, each victim-suspect dyad is negatively associated with refusal in comparison to cases involving Black victims and suspects, suggesting support for traditional devaluation. However, only two racial dyads remain significant when various victim and suspect demographics are controlled for. As was the case in Model 24, cases involving Black suspects and White victims (on their own and in combination with Black victims) have significantly lower odds of refusal than ones involving Black suspects and victims, suggesting that White victims' cases are taken seriously when offended against by one or more Black suspects. Specifically, compared to cases involving Black victims and suspects, cases involving White victims and Black suspects have significantly lower refusal odds (Exp(B)= 0.31, $ß$ = -1.16, $p < 0.001$). Again, Black victims' cases appear to be taken more seriously than Black victim-suspect cases when they involve White victims and Black suspects (Exp(B)= 0.24, $ß$ = -1.45, $p < 0.001$). Cases involving White suspects (WvWs, MvMs, and MvWs) are not significantly more likely to be prosecuted than Black victim and suspect cases when victim and offender demographic information is controlled for.

### 6.2.3 EXAMINING PERSONS AND CASES

A number of person devaluation indicators become significantly associated with case refusal when case-level indicators are added to case refusal models (Table 43). Although cases involving Black and White victims no longer have significantly lower odds of case refusal than ones involving White victims, in the victim-specific model of case refusal (Model 28), Black victim race remains a significant predictor of case refusal,

with crimes involving Black victims having odds of refusal that are 1.88 times as large as the odds for crimes involving White victims ($ß = 0.63$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting devaluation. The effect of victim race on case refusal holds – and, in fact, increases – in Model 29, which includes suspect and case characteristics (Exp(B) = 2.22, $ß = 0.80$, $p < 0.001$).

The same two racial dyad combinations remain significant in the updated racial dyad model (Model 30). Cases involving Black suspects and White victims (on their own and in combination with Black victims) have lower odds of case refusal than ones involving Black suspects and victims (WvBs: Exp(B)= 0.43, $ß = -0.85$, $p < 0.001$; MvBs: Exp(B)= 0.38, $ß = -0.97$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests not only that White victims' cases are taken seriously when offended against by one or more Black suspects, but also that Black victims' cases are taken seriously only when they involve White victims and Black suspects, even when case factors are controlled for.

Victim sex emerges as a significant predictor of case refusal in this model, with male victims' cases having odds of refusal that are almost two times as large as the odds for female victims' cases (Exp(B) = 1.79, $ß = 0.58$, $p < 0.001$). This finding is in line with the ideal victim hypothesis and in contrast to the typical victim devaluation thesis. Models 29 and 30, which include suspect and case characteristics, find similar results regarding male victims. In addition, they find that the odds of case refusal for cases involving male suspects are significantly less than the odds of refusal for cases involving female suspects, suggesting that males are disproportionately prioritized for punishment in the prosecutor's office in addition to being devalued as victims at clearance and case screening stages.

**Table 43. Logistic regressions examining person and case characteristics and violent crime case refusal in St. Louis, MO (2015)**

| | MODEL 28 Victim and Case Factors | | | MODEL 29 Victim, Suspect, and Case Factors | | | MODEL 30 Victim, Suspect, and Case Factors w/ Racial Dyads | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** |
| ***Victim characteristics*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Male victim(s) | 0.581** | 0.195 | 1.788** | 0.581*** | 0.149 | 1.787*** | 0.588*** | 0.149 | 1.800*** |
| Male and female victims | 0.161 | 0.279 | 1.175 | 0.164 | 0.311 | 1.178 | 0.165 | 0.285 | 1.180 |
| Female victim(s) (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Black victim(s) | 0.632** | 0.204 | 1.882** | 0.799*** | 0.233 | 2.224*** | | | |
| Black and White victims | -0.374 | 0.255 | 0.688 | -0.216 | 0.256 | 0.806 | | | |
| White victim(s) (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | | | |
| Non-Hispanic victim(s) | 0.212 | 0.579 | 1.237 | -1.495 | 0.827 | 0.224 | -1.404 | 0.780 | 0.246 |
| Hispanic victim(s) (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Victim age | 0.037 | 0.022 | 1.037 | 0.028 | 0.027 | 1.028 | 0.031 | 0.0275 | 1.032 |
| Victim age squared | -0.001* | 0.000 | 0.999* | -0.000 | 0.000 | 1.000 | -0.000 | 0.000 | 1.000 |
| Victims of multiple ages | 0.007 | 0.446 | 1.007 | 0.024 | 0.451 | 1.024 | 0.029 | 0.463 | 1.029 |
| Victim(s) of single age (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Suspect characteristics*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Male suspect(s) | | | | -0.293*** | 0.068 | 0.746*** | -0.283*** | 0.067 | 0.754*** |
| Male and female suspects | | | | 0.063 | 0.366 | 1.065 | 0.131 | 0.355 | 1.140 |
| Female suspect(s) (reference) | | | | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Black suspect(s) | | | | -0.499 | 0.278 | 0.607 | | | |
| Black and White suspects | | | | -0.414 | 0.575 | 0.661 | | | |
| White suspect(s) | | | | – | – | – | | | |
| Non-Hispanic suspect(s) | | | | 2.913*** | 0.857 | 18.410*** | 2.772*** | 0.828 | 15.990*** |
| Hispanic suspect(s) (reference) | | | | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Suspect age | | | | 0.070 | 0.051 | 1.072 | 0.074 | 0.051 | 1.077 |
| Suspect age squared | | | | -0.001 | 0.001 | 0.999 | -0.001 | 0.001 | 0.999 |
| Suspects of multiple ages | | | | -0.238 | 0.416 | 0.788 | -0.160 | 0.387 | 0.852 |
| Suspect(s) of single age (reference) | | | | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Victim-suspect racial dyads*** | | | | | | | | | |
| WvWs | | | | | | | -0.221 | 0.231 | 0.802 |
| MvMs | | | | | | | -0.549 | 1.055 | 0.578 |
| BvWs | | | | | | | 0.002 | 0.487 | 1.002 |
| BvMs | | | | | | | – | – | – |

**Table 43 (continued)**

| | MODEL 28 | | | MODEL 29 | | | MODEL 30 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** |
| WvBs | | | | | | | -0.853*** | 0.205 | 0.426*** |
| WvMs | | | | | | | – | – | – |
| MvBs | | | | | | | -0.965** | 0.332 | 0.381** |
| MvWs | | | | | | | -1.728 | 1.575 | 0.178 |
| BvBs (reference) | | | | | | | – | – | – |
| ***Most serious crime type*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Homicide | -1.059 | 0.691 | 0.347 | -1.02 | 0.718 | 0.361 | -1.007 | 0.712 | 0.365 |
| Robbery | -0.069 | 0.105 | 0.933 | -0.033 | 0.106 | 0.968 | -0.041 | 0.115 | 0.960 |
| Rape | 0.370 | 0.591 | 1.447 | 0.357 | 0.532 | 1.430 | 0.312 | 0.532 | 1.367 |
| Assault (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Charge and person counts*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Number of charges | -0.361*** | 0.083 | 0.697*** | -0.408*** | 0.066 | 0.665*** | -0.399*** | 0.065 | 0.671*** |
| Number of victims | -0.054 | 0.155 | 0.948 | -0.037 | 0.177 | 0.964 | -0.044 | 0.185 | 0.957 |
| Number of suspects | 0.152* | 0.0664 | 1.164* | 0.206 | 0.171 | 1.229 | 0.193 | 0.16 | 1.213 |
| ***Weapon type(s)*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Firearm | -0.212 | 0.138 | 0.809 | -0.153 | 0.153 | 0.858 | -0.171 | 0.156 | 0.842 |
| Knife | 0.154 | 0.260 | 1.166 | 0.097 | 0.295 | 1.101 | 0.119 | 0.292 | 1.126 |
| Unknown/other weapon | 1.571 | 0.995 | 4.810 | 1.188 | 0.956 | 3.282 | 1.171 | 0.942 | 3.224 |
| Multiple weapon types | 0.112 | 0.316 | 1.119 | 0.160 | 0.336 | 1.173 | 0.137 | 0.328 | 1.147 |
| No weapon | -0.421 | 0.387 | 0.656 | -0.38 | 0.385 | 0.684 | -0.406 | 0.384 | 0.666 |
| Personal weapon (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Victim injury*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Minor injury | 0.092 | 0.146 | 1.097 | 0.072 | 0.154 | 1.075 | 0.065 | 0.15 | 1.067 |
| Major injury | -0.625*** | 0.134 | 0.535*** | -0.635*** | 0.156 | 0.530*** | -0.638*** | 0.161 | 0.528*** |
| Multiple injury types | -0.218 | 0.569 | 0.804 | -0.248 | 0.547 | 0.781 | -0.289 | 0.570 | 0.749 |
| No/unknown injury (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Victim-suspect relationship*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Within family | 0.381 | 0.229 | 1.464 | 0.329 | 0.205 | 1.389 | 0.303 | 0.205 | 1.354 |
| Outside of family | 0.875*** | 0.010 | 2.399*** | 0.834*** | 0.087 | 2.302*** | 0.815*** | 0.097 | 2.260*** |
| Other relationship | 1.091 | 0.654 | 2.977 | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Unknown relationship | 1.359*** | 0.184 | 3.892*** | 1.526*** | 0.217 | 4.598*** | 1.493*** | 0.228 | 4.451*** |
| Relationship not applicable | -1.045** | 0.336 | 0.352** | -0.940* | 0.391 | 0.391* | -0.948* | 0.384 | 0.387* |
| Multiple relationships | 0.819*** | 0.136 | 2.268*** | 0.706*** | 0.186 | 2.027*** | 0.632** | 0.203 | 1.881** |
| Stranger (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |

**Table 43 (continued)**

| | MODEL 28 | | | MODEL 29 | | | MODEL 30 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** |
| ***Additional controls*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Second shift | 0.108 | 0.212 | 1.114 | 0.173 | 0.206 | 1.189 | 0.180 | 0.208 | 1.198 |
| Third shift | 0.301 | 0.206 | 1.352 | 0.343 | 0.211 | 1.409 | 0.325 | 0.217 | 1.384 |
| First shift (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Weekday | -0.056 | 0.117 | 0.946 | -0.0451 | 0.124 | 0.956 | -0.069 | 0.136 | 0.933 |
| Weekend (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Attempted | 0.098 | 0.612 | 1.103 | 0.034 | 0.555 | 1.034 | 0.038 | 0.558 | 1.039 |
| Completed (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Domestic | 0.481*** | 0.118 | 1.618*** | 0.493*** | 0.082 | 1.638*** | 0.479*** | 0.085 | 1.615*** |
| Not domestic (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Justice system action*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Witness | -0.075 | 0.234 | 0.927 | 0.037 | 0.232 | 1.037 | 0.064 | 0.240 | 1.066 |
| No witness (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Constant | -1.070 | 0.793 | 0.343 | -2.723 | 1.618 | 0.066 | -2.439 | 1.602 | 0.087 |

* indicates p < .05, ** indicates p < .01, *** indicates p < .001

Model 28. L1 *N* = 1,259 offenses; L2 *N* = 291 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

Model 29. L1 *N* = 1,227 offenses; L2 *N* = 289 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

Model 30. L1 *N* = 1,220 offenses; L2 *N* = 289 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

While victim ethnicity appears to be important for clearance in models that consider case factors, victim ethnicity effects dissipate in Models 28-30. In contrast to clearance models, suspect ethnicity remains a strong indicator of case refusal. The results from Models 29 and 30 show that cases involving non-Hispanic suspects have odds of case refusal that are 18.41 and 15.99 times as large as the odds for cases involving Hispanic suspects, suggesting in line with expectations that Hispanic suspects are punitively treated at the case screening stage (Model 29: $ß = 2.91$, $p < 0.001$, Model 30: $ß = 2.77$, $p < 0.001$). These results suggest that while victim devaluation may be impacting case clearance, Hispanic suspects are likely to be prosecuted at higher rates than non-Hispanic suspects.

A small set of case factors appears to be important in influencing case refusal across all models, with the exception of number of suspects, which is only positively and significantly associated with case refusal in the victim-specific model (Exp(B) = 1.16, $ß = 0.15$, $p < 0.01$). Notably, the significant indicators in case refusal models differ from those in clearance models.[66] As is to be expected and in line with clearance models, number of charges is negatively and significantly associated with case refusal across models, and cases involving victims with major injuries appear to be taken more seriously than cases involving no or unknown injury types. In contrast to expectations, weapon types, crime types, and attempted status are not significantly related to case refusal.

[66] Note that clearance models found crime type, weapon type, victim-suspect relationship, domestic status, attempted status, victim injury, and number of charges to be significantly associated with clearance in ways that mostly aligned with the situational thesis.

Like in clearance analyses, which found negative relationships between unknown victim-suspect relationship and clearance, unknown relationships appear to increase the odds of prosecutorial case dismissal. Cases with this relationship type have odds of refusal that are nearly four times as large as cases involving stranger relationships in the victim-specific model (Exp(B)= 3.89, ß = 1.36, $p < 0.001$), and effect sizes increase when suspect characteristics are included in the model (Model 29: Exp(B)= 4.60, ß = 1.52, $p < 0.001$; Model 18: Exp(B)= 4.45, ß = 1.49, $p < 0.001$). In line with clearance models, which found not applicable relationship cases to be positively associated with clearance, cases falling within the relationship not applicable category have significantly lower odds of case refusal than stranger cases across models.

While other victim-suspect relationship types and domestic case status also have large effects on case refusal, they influence case refusals in ways that contradict hypotheses. Specifically, and in contrast with hypotheses, cases involving close interpersonal relationships appear to be given less, rather than more, attention by prosecutors at this stage in comparison to cases involving strangers. Within family relationships are positively, though not significantly, associated with case refusal, and outside of family relationships have odds of case refusal that are more than 2.2 times as large as the odds for stranger cases across all models. In contrast to expectations that multiple relationship types would increase prosecution, complaints involving multiple types of relationships are found across models to have odds of refusal that are at least 1.8 times as large as the odds of refusal for cases limited to involving strangers. Across models, domestic cases are also found to be more – not less – likely to be refused for

prosecution. Overall, then, the results suggest that cases involving close interpersonal relationships may not be prioritized at the case screening stage.

In contrast to the case solvability thesis, and in line with clearance models, complaints that occurred during the late afternoon or evening (second shift) or during the night and early morning (third shift) do not have lower prosecution likelihoods than first shift complaints, and odds of prosecution do not significantly depend on the day of week that a crime occurred, most likely because prosecutors are not affected by higher weekend caseloads. Attempted crime status is not associated with case refusal, and in most instances, complaints involving more than one suspect or victim are not significantly more likely to be prosecuted than ones involving one suspect or victim. Justice system action at the policing stage does not appear to influence prosecution at the case screening stage. It is important to note that witness information may change by the time that cases reach the prosecutor's office.

### 6.2.4 EXAMINING, PERSONS, CASES, AND NEIGHBORHOODS

Neighborhood factors are considered in relation to case refusal in Models 31-33 (Table 44) to determine whether their inclusion alters results. With the exception of racial composition, neighborhood factors are not found to impact case refusal odds. Concentrated disadvantage, population size, and cross-classification status are all non-significant predictors of case refusal, and in contrast to the association devaluation hypothesis, neighborhood crime does not emerge as a significant predictor of case refusal in this set of models. In contrast to the group devaluation perspective, but in line with the notion that Black populations are disproportionately punished by the justice system, the

**Table 44. Logistic regressions examining person-, case-, and neighborhood-level characteristics and violent crime case refusal in St. Louis, MO (2015)**

| | MODEL 31 Victim, Case, and Neighborhood Factors | | | MODEL 32 Victim, Suspect, Case, and Neighborhood Factors | | | MODEL 33 Victim, Suspect, Case, and Neighborhood Factors w/ Racial Dyads | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** |
| ***Victim characteristics*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Male victim(s) | 0.577** | 0.198 | 1.781** | 0.575*** | 0.151 | 1.776*** | 0.582*** | 0.152 | 1.790*** |
| Male and female victims | 0.184 | 0.290 | 1.202 | 0.186 | 0.322 | 1.204 | 0.189 | 0.297 | 1.209 |
| Female victim(s) (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Black victim(s) | 0.692*** | 0.201 | 1.997*** | 0.837*** | 0.229 | 2.309*** | | | |
| Black and White victims | -0.337 | 0.257 | 0.714 | -0.173 | 0.267 | 0.841 | | | |
| White victim(s) (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | | | |
| Non-Hispanic victim(s) | 0.242 | 0.568 | 1.274 | -1.473 | 0.766 | 0.229 | -1.367 | 0.715 | 0.255 |
| Hispanic victim(s) (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Victim age | 0.0365 | 0.022 | 1.037 | 0.028 | 0.026 | 1.028 | 0.032 | 0.027 | 1.032 |
| Victim age squared | -0.001* | 0.000 | 0.999* | -0.000 | 0.000 | 1.000 | -0.000 | 0.000 | 1.000 |
| Victims of multiple ages | 0.014 | 0.451 | 1.014 | 0.031 | 0.458 | 1.031 | 0.035 | 0.471 | 1.035 |
| Victim(s) of single age (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Suspect characteristics*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Male suspect(s) | | | | -0.275*** | 0.075 | 0.760*** | -0.264*** | 0.074 | 0.768*** |
| Male and female suspects | | | | 0.085 | 0.381 | 1.088 | 0.153 | 0.369 | 1.166 |
| Female suspect(s) (reference) | | | | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Black suspect(s) | | | | -0.498 | 0.267 | 0.607 | | | |
| Black and White suspects | | | | -0.483 | 0.623 | 0.617 | | | |
| White suspect(s) (reference) | | | | – | – | – | | | |
| Non-Hispanic suspect(s) | | | | 2.951*** | 0.803 | 19.120*** | 2.791*** | 0.762 | 16.290*** |
| Hispanic suspect(s) (reference) | | | | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Suspect age | | | | 0.070 | 0.052 | 1.073 | 0.075 | 0.053 | 1.077 |
| Suspect age squared | | | | -0.001 | 0.001 | 0.999 | -0.001 | 0.001 | 0.999 |
| Suspects of multiple ages | | | | -0.232 | 0.414 | 0.793 | -0.150 | 0.383 | 0.861 |
| Suspect(s) of single age (reference) | | | | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Victim-suspect racial dyads*** | | | | | | | | | |
| WvWs | | | | | | | -0.249 | 0.218 | 0.779 |
| MvMs | | | | | | | -0.578 | 1.132 | 0.561 |

| **Table 44 (continued)** | **MODEL 31** | | | **MODEL 32** | | | **MODEL 33** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** |
| BvWs | | | | | | | -0.064 | 0.496 | 0.938 |
| BvMs | | | | | | | – | – | – |
| WvBs | | | | | | | -0.895*** | 0.211 | 0.409*** |
| WvMs | | | | | | | - | - | - |
| MvBs | | | | | | | -0.970** | 0.338 | 0.379** |
| MvWs | | | | | | | -1.669 | 1.609 | 0.188 |
| BvBs (reference) | | | | | | | – | – | – |
| ***Most serious crime type*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Homicide | -1.077 | 0.669 | 0.341 | -1.024 | 0.697 | 0.359 | -1.011 | 0.69 | 0.364 |
| Robbery | -0.066 | 0.110 | 0.936 | -0.028 | 0.108 | 0.973 | -0.036 | 0.118 | 0.965 |
| Rape | 0.358 | 0.595 | 1.431 | 0.356 | 0.521 | 1.427 | 0.306 | 0.516 | 1.358 |
| Assault (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Charge and person counts*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Number of charges | -0.359*** | 0.082 | 0.698*** | -0.406*** | 0.065 | 0.666*** | -0.397*** | 0.063 | 0.672*** |
| Number of victims | -0.058 | 0.166 | 0.943 | -0.0413 | 0.189 | 0.960 | -0.049 | 0.197 | 0.952 |
| Number of suspects | 0.146* | 0.063 | 1.158* | 0.201 | 0.169 | 1.223 | 0.187 | 0.157 | 1.205 |
| ***Weapon type(s)*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Firearm | -0.210 | 0.142 | 0.811 | -0.156 | 0.154 | 0.855 | -0.178 | 0.156 | 0.837 |
| Knife | 0.155 | 0.267 | 1.168 | 0.103 | 0.299 | 1.109 | 0.122 | 0.296 | 1.129 |
| Unknown/other weapon | 1.538 | 0.989 | 4.655 | 1.170 | 0.963 | 3.222 | 1.152 | 0.943 | 3.165 |
| Multiple weapon types | 0.105 | 0.304 | 1.111 | 0.147 | 0.327 | 1.158 | 0.123 | 0.318 | 1.131 |
| No weapon | -0.419 | 0.364 | 0.658 | -0.395 | 0.348 | 0.673 | -0.422 | 0.345 | 0.655 |
| Personal weapon (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Victim injury*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Minor injury | 0.089 | 0.147 | 1.093 | 0.068 | 0.154 | 1.070 | 0.056 | 0.149 | 1.058 |
| Major injury | -0.619*** | 0.136 | 0.538*** | -0.630*** | 0.160 | 0.532*** | -0.634*** | 0.164 | 0.530*** |
| Multiple injury types | -0.198 | 0.576 | 0.820 | -0.240 | 0.557 | 0.787 | -0.283 | 0.582 | 0.754 |
| No/unknown injury (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Victim-suspect relationship*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Within family | 0.410 | 0.231 | 1.508 | 0.369 | 0.203 | 1.446 | 0.345 | 0.205 | 1.412 |
| Outside of family | 0.902*** | 0.097 | 2.464*** | 0.863*** | 0.086 | 2.371*** | 0.846*** | 0.096 | 2.330*** |
| Other relationship | 1.091 | 0.628 | 2.977 | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Unknown relationship | 1.365*** | 0.195 | 3.916*** | 1.528*** | 0.222 | 4.609*** | 1.495*** | 0.234 | 4.457*** |
| Relationship not applicable | -1.039** | 0.331 | 0.354** | -0.938* | 0.390 | 0.391* | -0.945* | 0.384 | 0.389* |

**Table 44 (continued)**

| | MODEL 31 | | | MODEL 32 | | | MODEL 33 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** |
| Multiple relationships | 0.850*** | 0.144 | 2.339*** | 0.733*** | 0.187 | 2.082*** | 0.662** | 0.208 | 1.939** |
| Stranger (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Additional controls*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Second shift | 0.109 | 0.213 | 1.116 | 0.173 | 0.205 | 1.189 | 0.179 | 0.208 | 1.196 |
| Third shift | 0.29 | 0.198 | 1.337 | 0.328 | 0.201 | 1.388 | 0.308 | 0.207 | 1.361 |
| First shift (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Weekday | -0.047 | 0.116 | 0.954 | -0.039 | 0.122 | 0.962 | -0.062 | 0.133 | 0.940 |
| Weekend (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Attempted | 0.061 | 0.648 | 1.062 | 0.012 | 0.580 | 1.012 | 0.016 | 0.584 | 1.016 |
| Completed (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Domestic | 0.489*** | 0.118 | 1.631*** | 0.501*** | 0.084 | 1.650*** | 0.485*** | 0.089 | 1.624*** |
| Not domestic (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Justice system action*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Witness | -0.048 | 0.228 | 0.953 | 0.056 | 0.22 | 1.058 | 0.083 | 0.228 | 1.087 |
| No witness (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Neighborhood characteristics*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Concentrated disadvantage | 0.049 | 0.056 | 1.050 | 0.025 | 0.053 | 1.025 | 0.027 | 0.057 | 1.028 |
| Percent Black | -0.004* | 0.002 | 0.996* | -0.003 | 0.002 | 0.997 | -0.003 | 0.002 | 0.997 |
| Population | -0.162 | 0.151 | 0.850 | -0.212 | 0.160 | 0.809 | -0.218 | 0.171 | 0.804 |
| Cross-classified | 0.019 | 0.101 | 1.019 | 0.056 | 0.095 | 1.057 | 0.050 | 0.095 | 1.051 |
| Not cross-classified (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Neighborhood crime | 0.008 | 0.005 | 1.008 | 0.009 | 0.007 | 1.009 | 0.010 | 0.007 | 1.010 |
| Constant | 0.019 | 1.323 | 1.019 | -1.420 | 1.611 | 0.242 | -1.066 | 1.619 | 0.344 |

* indicates $p < .05$, ** indicates $p < .01$, *** indicates $p < .001$

Model 31. L1 $N$ = 1,259 offenses; L2 $N$ = 291 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

Model 32. L1 $N$ = 1,227 offenses; L2 $N$ = 289 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

Model 33. L1 $N$ = 1,220 offenses; L2 $N$ = 289 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

results from the victim-specific model (Model 31) show that increases in the Black population size are significantly associated with decreases in case refusal odds, but the effect size is small (Exp(B) = 1.00, ß = -0.00, $p < 0.05$). Person and case findings remain stable when neighborhood factors are added to the models.

### 6.2.5 EXAMINING PERSONS, CASES, NEIGHBORHOODS, AND POLICE DISTRICTS

Police district indicators are added to the next set of case refusal models to determine whether police organizational factors influence prosecutorial case screening (see Table 45). Across models, effects and significance levels remain largely consistent with earlier models, with detective workload and district crime rates having non-significant effects on case refusal. However, the inclusion of police factors does result in changes in neighborhood crime and racial composition effects in ways that align with hypotheses. In Models 34 and 35, neighborhood crime is positively associated with case refusal, suggesting support for the association devaluation hypothesis (Models 34 and 35: Exp(B) = 1.01, ß = 0.01, $p < 0.05$). In line with the group devaluation perspective, increases in Black populations are associated in Model 35 with significantly increased odds of case refusal, but the effect size is small (Exp(B) = 1.00, ß = 0.00, $p < 0.05$).

**Table 45. Logistic regressions examining person, case, neighborhood, and police district characteristics and violent crime case refusal in St. Louis, MO (2015)**

| | MODEL 34 Victim, Case, Neighborhood, and Police District Factors | | | MODEL 35 Victim, Suspect, Case, Neighborhood, and Police District Factors | | | MODEL 36 Victim, Suspect, Case, Neighborhood, and Police District Factors w/ Racial Dyads | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** |
| ***Victim characteristics*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Male victim(s) | 0.570** | 0.195 | 1.769** | 0.570*** | 0.153 | 1.768*** | 0.577*** | 0.152 | 1.780*** |
| Male and female victims | 0.181 | 0.277 | 1.198 | 0.184 | 0.306 | 1.202 | 0.186 | 0.283 | 1.205 |
| Female victim(s) (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Black victim(s) | 0.754*** | 0.185 | 2.125*** | 0.901*** | 0.218 | 2.463*** | | | |
| Black and White victims | -0.322 | 0.273 | 0.725 | -0.136 | 0.274 | 0.873 | | | |
| White victim(s) (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | | | |
| Non-Hispanic victim(s) | 0.355 | 0.611 | 1.426 | -1.389 | 0.713 | 0.249 | -1.280 | 0.671 | 0.278 |
| Hispanic victim(s) (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Victim age | 0.037 | 0.023 | 1.038 | 0.030 | 0.028 | 1.030 | 0.033 | 0.028 | 1.034 |
| Victim age squared | -0.001* | 0.000 | 0.999* | -0.000 | 0.000 | 1.000 | -0.000 | 0.000 | 1.000 |
| Victims of multiple ages | 0.010 | 0.453 | 1.010 | 0.019 | 0.458 | 1.020 | 0.022 | 0.470 | 1.023 |
| Victim(s) of single age (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Suspect characteristics*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Male suspect(s) | | | | -0.266*** | 0.075 | 0.766*** | -0.255*** | 0.069 | 0.775*** |
| Male and female suspects | | | | 0.068 | 0.368 | 1.070 | 0.137 | 0.354 | 1.147 |
| Female suspect(s) (reference) | | | | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Black suspect(s) | | | | -0.457 | 0.278 | 0.633 | | | |
| Black and White suspects | | | | -0.548 | 0.588 | 0.578 | | | |
| White suspect(s) (reference) | | | | – | – | – | | | |
| Non-Hispanic suspect(s) | | | | 2.928*** | 0.779 | 18.690*** | 2.766*** | 0.737 | 15.900*** |
| Hispanic suspect(s) (reference) | | | | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Suspect age | | | | 0.065 | 0.051 | 1.067 | 0.069 | 0.052 | 1.072 |
| Suspect age squared | | | | -0.001 | 0.001 | 0.999 | -0.001 | 0.001 | 0.999 |
| Suspects of multiple ages | | | | -0.280 | 0.410 | 0.755 | -0.199 | 0.379 | 0.820 |
| Suspect(s) of single age (reference) | | | | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Victim-suspect racial dyads*** | | | | | | | | | |
| WvWs | | | | | | | -0.362 | 0.195 | 0.696 |

| Table 45 (continued) | MODEL 34 | | | MODEL 35 | | | MODEL 36 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ß | SE | OR | ß | SE | OR | ß | SE | OR |
| MvMs | | | | | | | -0.703 | 1.127 | 0.495 |
| BvWs | | | | | | | -0.092 | 0.511 | 0.912 |
| BvMs | | | | | | | – | – | – |
| WvBs | | | | | | | -0.949*** | 0.197 | 0.387*** |
| WvMs | | | | | | | – | – | – |
| MvBs | | | | | | | -1.012** | 0.345 | 0.364** |
| MvWs | | | | | | | -1.581 | 1.667 | 0.206 |
| BvBs (reference) | | | | | | | – | – | – |
| ***Most serious crime type*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Homicide | -1.015 | 0.641 | 0.362 | -0.960 | 0.683 | 0.383 | -0.947 | 0.675 | 0.388 |
| Robbery | -0.028 | 0.104 | 0.972 | -0.004 | 0.102 | 0.996 | -0.014 | 0.110 | 0.986 |
| Rape | 0.448 | 0.604 | 1.565 | 0.454 | 0.539 | 1.575 | 0.407 | 0.534 | 1.502 |
| Assault (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Charge and person counts*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Number of charges | -0.359*** | 0.081 | 0.698*** | -0.410*** | 0.062 | 0.664*** | -0.401*** | 0.060 | 0.669*** |
| Number of victims | -0.059 | 0.161 | 0.943 | -0.039 | 0.182 | 0.962 | -0.045 | 0.188 | 0.956 |
| Number of suspects | 0.157* | 0.067 | 1.170* | 0.223 | 0.161 | 1.249 | 0.211 | 0.150 | 1.235 |
| ***Weapon type(s)*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Firearm | -0.227 | 0.131 | 0.797 | -0.185 | 0.141 | 0.831 | -0.203 | 0.142 | 0.816 |
| Knife | 0.149 | 0.272 | 1.160 | 0.102 | 0.299 | 1.107 | 0.124 | 0.294 | 1.132 |
| Unknown/other weapon | 1.611 | 0.964 | 5.010 | 1.295 | 1.015 | 3.651 | 1.275 | 0.996 | 3.580 |
| Multiple weapon types | 0.070 | 0.323 | 1.073 | 0.108 | 0.345 | 1.114 | 0.083 | 0.337 | 1.086 |
| No weapon | -0.413 | 0.327 | 0.661 | -0.377 | 0.319 | 0.686 | -0.399 | 0.318 | 0.671 |
| Personal weapon (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Victim injury*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Minor injury | 0.068 | 0.135 | 1.070 | 0.048 | 0.141 | 1.049 | 0.039 | 0.137 | 1.040 |
| Major injury | -0.630*** | 0.145 | 0.533*** | -0.643*** | 0.169 | 0.526*** | -0.647*** | 0.172 | 0.524*** |
| Multiple injury types | -0.211 | 0.562 | 0.810 | -0.252 | 0.543 | 0.778 | -0.285 | 0.568 | 0.752 |
| No/unknown injury (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Victim-suspect relationship*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Within family | 0.384 | 0.256 | 1.468 | 0.340 | 0.239 | 1.405 | 0.316 | 0.240 | 1.371 |
| Outside of family | 0.868*** | 0.103 | 2.382*** | 0.822*** | 0.088 | 2.275*** | 0.803*** | 0.098 | 2.232*** |
| Other relationship | 1.087 | 0.647 | 2.964 | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Unknown relationship | 1.325*** | 0.201 | 3.762*** | 1.473*** | 0.241 | 4.362*** | 1.441*** | 0.250 | 4.223*** |

**Table 45 (continued)**

| | MODEL 34 | | | MODEL 35 | | | MODEL 36 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** |
| Relationship not applicable | -1.005** | 0.336 | 0.366** | -0.898* | 0.403 | 0.408* | -0.905* | 0.397 | 0.405* |
| Multiple relationships | 0.789*** | 0.136 | 2.202*** | 0.689*** | 0.185 | 1.992*** | 0.614** | 0.195 | 1.848** |
| Stranger (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Additional controls*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Second shift | 0.104 | 0.206 | 1.110 | 0.163 | 0.196 | 1.177 | 0.171 | 0.198 | 1.187 |
| Third shift | 0.283 | 0.190 | 1.327 | 0.322 | 0.191 | 1.380 | 0.304 | 0.199 | 1.355 |
| First shift (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Weekday | -0.033 | 0.101 | 0.967 | -0.029 | 0.106 | 0.972 | -0.051 | 0.118 | 0.950 |
| Weekend (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Attempted | 0.016 | 0.633 | 1.016 | -0.060 | 0.565 | 0.942 | -0.050 | 0.566 | 0.951 |
| Completed (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Domestic | 0.495*** | 0.118 | 1.641*** | 0.509*** | 0.091 | 1.664*** | 0.496*** | 0.098 | 1.642*** |
| Not domestic (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Justice system action*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Witness | -0.057 | 0.218 | 0.945 | 0.049 | 0.209 | 1.050 | 0.066 | 0.215 | 1.069 |
| No witness (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Neighborhood characteristics*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Concentrated disadvantage | 0.007 | 0.046 | 1.007 | -0.019 | 0.040 | 0.981 | -0.015 | 0.045 | 0.985 |
| Percent Black | 0.002 | 0.001 | 1.002 | 0.003* | 0.001 | 1.003* | 0.003 | 0.002 | 1.003 |
| Population | -0.175 | 0.156 | 0.839 | -0.220 | 0.167 | 0.802 | -0.225 | 0.175 | 0.799 |
| Cross-classified | 0.011 | 0.079 | 1.011 | 0.046 | 0.073 | 1.047 | 0.041 | 0.073 | 1.042 |
| Not cross-classified (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Neighborhood crime | 0.012* | 0.005 | 1.012* | 0.013* | 0.007 | 1.014* | 0.014 | 0.007 | 1.014 |
| ***Police district characteristics*** | | | | | | | | | |
| District crime | -1.355 | 3.364 | 0.258 | -1.916 | 3.032 | 0.147 | -2.202 | 2.773 | 0.111 |
| Detective workload | 0.001 | 0.025 | 1.001 | 0.004 | 0.022 | 1.004 | 0.006 | 0.020 | 1.006 |
| Constant | 0.528 | 1.229 | 1.695 | -0.763 | 1.521 | 0.466 | -0.324 | 1.565 | 0.723 |

* indicates p < .05, ** indicates p < .01, *** indicates p < .001

Model 34. L1 *N* = 1,259 offenses; L2 *N* = 291 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

Model 35. L1 *N* = 1,227 offenses; L2 *N* = 289 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

Model 36. L1 *N* = 1,220 offenses; L2 *N* = 289 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

### 6.2.6 MODERATION EFFECTS

*Victim Race and Victim-Suspect Relationship*

In the final set of analyses, I assess how the moderator variables influence the relationship between race and case refusals. First, interactions between case solvability and victim race are added to the full victim, victim-suspect, and victim-suspect racial dyad case refusal models to determine whether stranger relationships lead to increased odds of case refusal in cases involving Black victims (alone and in combination with Black suspects). Like in clearance models, the stranger reference category is replaced by within family victim-suspect relationship across models, and the BvBs reference category is replaced by the WvBs dyad in the victim-suspect racial dyad model.

In contrast to clearance results and *H5*, the interactions are non-significant across case refusal models, suggesting that prosecutors are not more likely to refuse cases that involve Black victims and stranger relationships. An important caveat is that we cannot be sure that prosecutors are relying on the victim-suspect relationship data provided in the police data. Across models, cases involving Black victims (alone and in combination with Black suspects) have higher odds of refusal than cases involving White victims (alone and in combination with Black suspects), and cases involving stranger relationships have higher odds of case refusal than ones involving within family relationships.

**Table 46. Logistic regressions examining the interaction of victim race and victim-suspect relationship for violent crime case refusal in St. Louis, MO (2015)**

| | MODEL 37 Victim, Case, Neighborhood, and Police District Factors | | | MODEL 38 Victim, Suspect, Case, Neighborhood, and Police District Factors | | | MODEL 39 Victim, Suspect, Case, Neighborhood, and Police District Factors w/ Racial Dyads | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** |
| ***Victim characteristics*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Male victim(s) | 0.564** | 0.189 | 1.757** | 0.561*** | 0.150 | 1.753*** | 0.567*** | 0.149 | 1.762*** |
| Male and female victims | 0.234 | 0.265 | 1.264 | 0.241 | 0.303 | 1.273 | 0.241 | 0.284 | 1.273 |
| Female victim(s) (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Black victim(s) | 0.593*** | 0.173 | 1.810*** | 0.762*** | 0.175 | 2.142*** | | | |
| Black and White victims | -0.416 | 0.302 | 0.660 | -0.227 | 0.297 | 0.797 | | | |
| White victim(s) (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | | | |
| Non-Hispanic victim(s) | 0.413 | 0.634 | 1.512 | -1.332 | 0.698 | 0.264 | -1.239 | 0.691 | 0.290 |
| Hispanic victim(s) (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Victim age | 0.040 | 0.023 | 1.041 | 0.033 | 0.028 | 1.034 | 0.037 | 0.029 | 1.037 |
| Victim age squared | -0.001* | 0.000 | 0.999* | -0.000 | 0.000 | 1.000 | -0.000 | 0.000 | 1.000 |
| Victims of multiple ages | 0.026 | 0.453 | 1.026 | 0.033 | 0.458 | 1.033 | 0.037 | 0.472 | 1.037 |
| Victim(s) of single age (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Suspect characteristics*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Male suspect(s) | | | | -0.247** | 0.090 | 0.781** | -0.238** | 0.081 | 0.788** |
| Male and female suspects | | | | 0.064 | 0.377 | 1.066 | 0.131 | 0.365 | 1.140 |
| Female suspect(s) (reference) | | | | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Black suspect(s) | | | | -0.388 | 0.255 | 0.679 | | | |
| Black and White suspects | | | | -0.585 | 0.622 | 0.557 | | | |
| White suspect(s) (reference) | | | | – | – | – | | | |
| Non-Hispanic suspect(s) | | | | 2.908*** | 0.793 | 18.310*** | 2.775*** | 0.778 | 16.030*** |
| Hispanic suspect(s) (reference) | | | | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Suspect age | | | | 0.064 | 0.052 | 1.066 | 0.068 | 0.053 | 1.070 |
| Suspect age squared | | | | -0.001 | 0.001 | 0.999 | -0.001 | 0.001 | 0.999 |
| Suspects of multiple ages | | | | -0.291 | 0.419 | 0.748 | -0.209 | 0.385 | 0.812 |
| Suspect(s) of single age (reference) | | | | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Victim-suspect racial dyads*** | | | | | | | | | |

| Table 46 (continued) | MODEL 37 | | | MODEL 38 | | | MODEL 39 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ß | SE | OR | ß | SE | OR | ß | SE | OR |
| WvWs | | | | | | | 0.518** | 0.199 | 1.678** |
| MvMs | | | | | | | 0.037 | 1.029 | 1.038 |
| BvWs | | | | | | | 0.818 | 0.620 | 2.266 |
| BvMs | | | | | | | – | – | – |
| BvBs | | | | | | | 0.808*** | 0.159 | 2.244*** |
| WvMs | | | | | | | – | – | – |
| MvBs | | | | | | | -0.140 | 0.259 | 0.870 |
| MvWs | | | | | | | -0.878 | 1.651 | 0.416 |
| WvBs (reference) | | | | | | | – | – | – |
| ***Most serious crime type*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Homicide | -0.870 | 0.556 | 0.419 | -0.848 | 0.609 | 0.428 | -0.836 | 0.602 | 0.433 |
| Robbery | 0.022 | 0.116 | 1.022 | 0.027 | 0.117 | 1.028 | 0.019 | 0.123 | 1.019 |
| Rape | 0.402 | 0.586 | 1.494 | 0.423 | 0.533 | 1.527 | 0.377 | 0.535 | 1.458 |
| Assault (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Charge and person counts*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Number of charges | -0.342*** | 0.075 | 0.711*** | -0.393*** | 0.056 | 0.675*** | -0.384*** | 0.053 | 0.681*** |
| Number of victims | -0.057 | 0.157 | 0.945 | -0.040 | 0.181 | 0.961 | -0.046 | 0.188 | 0.955 |
| Number of suspects | 0.154* | 0.069 | 1.166* | 0.219 | 0.166 | 1.244 | 0.204 | 0.152 | 1.227 |
| ***Weapon type(s)*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Firearm | -0.202 | 0.142 | 0.817 | -0.166 | 0.148 | 0.847 | -0.186 | 0.148 | 0.830 |
| Knife | 0.140 | 0.273 | 1.151 | 0.102 | 0.303 | 1.107 | 0.122 | 0.300 | 1.130 |
| Unknown/other weapon | 1.691 | 1.044 | 5.423 | 1.345 | 1.051 | 3.840 | 1.321 | 1.033 | 3.747 |
| Multiple weapon types | 0.107 | 0.302 | 1.113 | 0.141 | 0.329 | 1.151 | 0.116 | 0.318 | 1.124 |
| No weapon | -0.433 | 0.305 | 0.649 | -0.393 | 0.295 | 0.675 | -0.417 | 0.293 | 0.659 |
| Personal weapon (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Victim injury*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Minor injury | 0.068 | 0.134 | 1.07 | 0.052 | 0.141 | 1.054 | 0.042 | 0.137 | 1.043 |
| Major injury | -0.652*** | 0.151 | 0.521*** | -0.664*** | 0.182 | 0.515*** | -0.668*** | 0.186 | 0.513*** |
| Multiple injury types | -0.234 | 0.525 | 0.791 | -0.265 | 0.524 | 0.767 | -0.305 | 0.544 | 0.737 |
| No/unknown injury (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Victim-suspect relationship (VSR)*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Stranger | -0.884*** | 0.215 | 0.413*** | -0.763*** | 0.221 | 0.466*** | -0.743** | 0.246 | 0.476** |
| Outside of family | 0.374** | 0.145 | 1.454** | 0.376* | 0.169 | 1.457* | 0.376* | 0.170 | 1.456* |
| Other relationship | 0.751 | 0.558 | 2.119 | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Unknown relationship | 0.811* | 0.334 | 2.250* | 0.998** | 0.307 | 2.714** | 0.984** | 0.319 | 2.676** |

**Table 46 (continued)**

| | MODEL 37 | | | MODEL 38 | | | MODEL 39 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** |
| Relationship not applicable | -1.144*** | 0.340 | 0.318*** | -1.019* | 0.421 | 0.361* | -1.021* | 0.411 | 0.360* |
| Multiple relationships | 0.308* | 0.142 | 1.360* | 0.278 | 0.205 | 1.32 | 0.225 | 0.233 | 1.252 |
| Within family (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Additional controls*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Second shift | 0.085 | 0.215 | 1.089 | 0.139 | 0.202 | 1.149 | 0.146 | 0.205 | 1.157 |
| Third shift | 0.266 | 0.192 | 1.305 | 0.300 | 0.186 | 1.349 | 0.282 | 0.197 | 1.326 |
| First shift (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Weekday | -0.026 | 0.104 | 0.975 | -0.030 | 0.108 | 0.970 | -0.057 | 0.114 | 0.945 |
| Weekend (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Attempted | 0.007 | 0.642 | 1.007 | -0.077 | 0.562 | 0.926 | -0.070 | 0.560 | 0.933 |
| Completed (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Domestic | 0.431*** | 0.126 | 1.539*** | 0.446*** | 0.103 | 1.562*** | 0.432*** | 0.105 | 1.540*** |
| Not domestic (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Justice system action*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Witness | -0.063 | 0.217 | 0.939 | 0.040 | 0.205 | 1.040 | 0.061 | 0.221 | 1.063 |
| No witness (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Neighborhood characteristics*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Concentrated disadvantage | 0.002 | 0.049 | 1.002 | -0.026 | 0.043 | 0.975 | -0.022 | 0.049 | 0.979 |
| Percent Black | 0.001 | 0.001 | 1.001 | 0.002 | 0.001 | 1.002 | 0.002 | 0.001 | 1.002 |
| Population | -0.194 | 0.155 | 0.824 | -0.236 | 0.165 | 0.789 | -0.244 | 0.179 | 0.784 |
| Cross-classified | 0.002 | 0.084 | 1.002 | 0.040 | 0.073 | 1.041 | 0.037 | 0.070 | 1.038 |
| Not cross-classified (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Neighborhood crime | 0.013* | 0.005 | 1.013* | 0.014* | 0.007 | 1.015* | 0.015* | 0.007 | 1.015* |
| ***Police district characteristics*** | | | | | | | | | |
| District crime | -0.937 | 3.190 | 0.392 | -1.542 | 2.877 | 0.214 | -1.817 | 2.587 | 0.162 |
| Detective workload | -0.002 | 0.024 | 0.998 | 0.002 | 0.021 | 1.002 | 0.004 | 0.018 | 1.004 |
| ***Interacting race and VSR*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Black victim X Stranger | 0.370 | 0.401 | 1.448 | 0.255 | 0.400 | 1.291 | | | |
| BvBs X Stranger | | | | | | | 0.258 | 0.382 | 1.294 |
| Constant | 1.138 | 1.256 | 3.120 | -0.214 | 1.471 | 0.808 | -0.656 | 1.623 | 0.519 |

* indicates p < .05, ** indicates p < .01, *** indicates p < .001

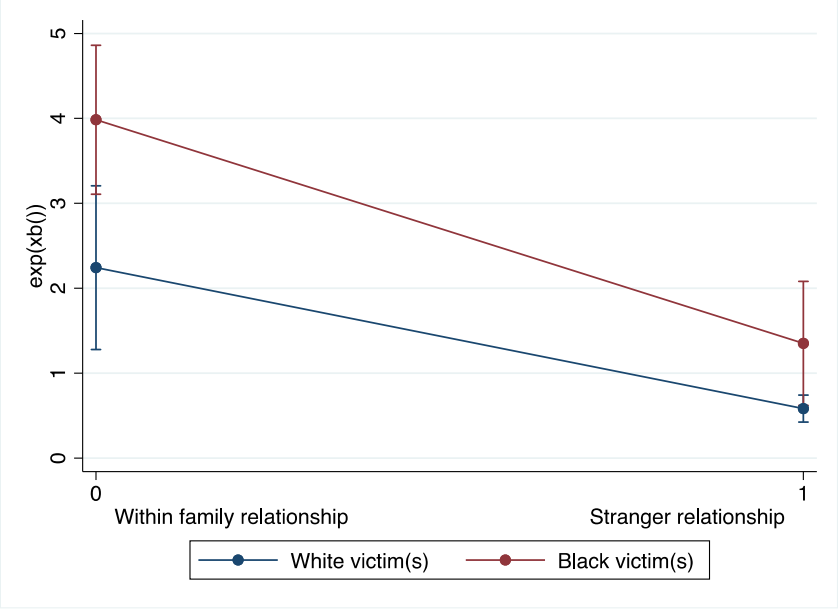
Model 37. L1 *N* = 1,259 offenses; L2 *N* = 291 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

Model 38. L1 *N* = 1,227 offenses; L2 *N* = 289 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

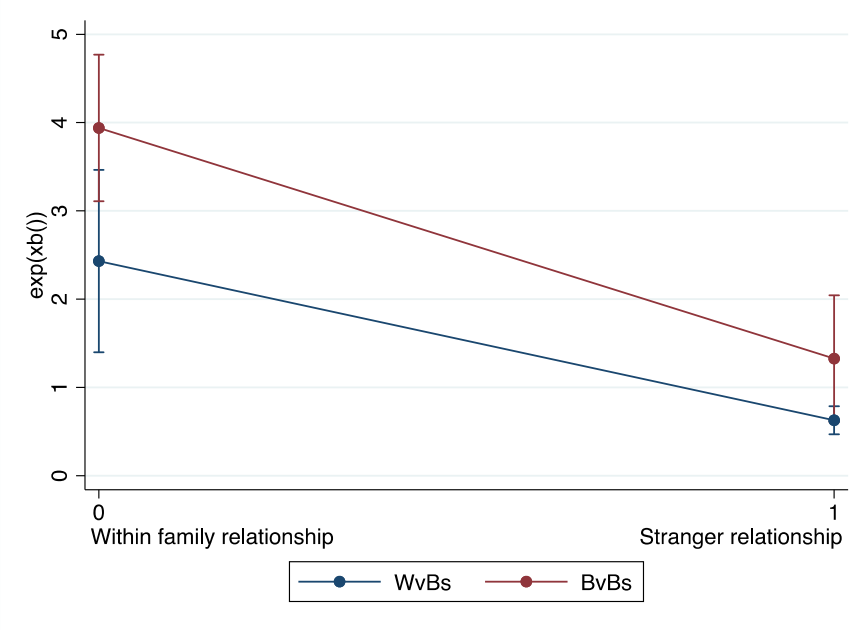
Model 39. L1 *N* = 1,220 offenses; L2 *N* = 289 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

**Figure 7. The relationship between victim-suspect relationship and case refusal, by victim race**

**A. Model 38**




**B. Model 39**



While there is no significant interaction between victim race and victim-suspect relationship, it is useful to display differences in odds for Black and White victims involving within family versus stranger relationships. Figure 7 displays predicted margins with 95 percent confidence intervals for the victim-suspect (Model 38) and victim-suspect racial dyad models (Model 39). In both models, the results show that for cases involving Black victims (alone and with Black suspects), the odds of case refusal are about three times greater in within family relationship cases versus stranger cases. For cases involving White victims (alone and with Black suspects), the ratio of the two odds is larger, at 3.86. Importantly, the overlapping confidence intervals suggest that while racial differences appear to decline depending on victim-suspect information, the differences are not significant.

Effect sizes and significance levels remain largely similar to prior models, though the addition of the interaction does result in neighborhood crime being positively associated with case refusal across models, suggesting support for association devaluation. Because the within family relationship category is used as the reference category in these models, the victim-suspect relationship coefficients cannot be compared to prior models.[67]

Since the WvBs racial dyad is used as the reference category in the racial dyad model (Model 39), results cannot be compared to prior dyad results. It is important to note, however, that cases involving White suspects and victims have odds of case refusal

[67] Notably, while cases involving within family relationships were not significantly more or less likely to be refused than ones involving stranger relationships in prior models, cases involving outside of family relationships are found to have significantly higher refusal odds than ones involving within family relationships across this set of models. This suggests perhaps that there is something about cases involving non-family interpersonal relationships (e.g., acquaintances, friends, boyfriends/girlfriends) that inhibit prosecution.

that are significantly higher than cases involving White victims and Black suspects, suggesting support for Black suspect over-punishment when comparing interracial crimes.

*Victim Race and Crime Type*

Case refusal models have demonstrated that Black victims' cases have higher odds of refusal than White victims' cases, but in contrast to expectations, homicides do not appear to have lower odds of refusal than assaults. To determine whether crime type moderates the effect of victim race on case refusal, interactions between victim race and crime type are modeled for the case refusal outcome (Table 47, Models 40-42). The WvBs reference category replaces the BvBs reference category in the racial dyad model, and assaults are used as the reference category for the homicide dummy variable.

While the interaction terms are non-significant across models, suggesting that crime type does not significantly moderate the relationship between victim race and crime type, results from predicted margins analyses from Models 41 and 42 show large differences in the refusal odds of assaults versus homicides involving Black victims (alone and in combination with Black suspects). Assaults that involve Black victims are more likely to be refused than assaults involving White victims, indicating perhaps that these cases are unlikely to be prioritized during case screening. In contrast, no significant differences are observed between racial groups when examining homicides alone. It is important to note that the effects for cases involving White victims (alone and in combination with Black suspects) have wide confidence intervals – likely resulting from the rarity of these types of cases – and should be interpreted with caution.

**Table 47. Logistic regressions examining the interaction of victim race and crime type for violent crime case refusal in St. Louis, MO (2015)**

| | MODEL 40 Victim, Case, Neighborhood, and Police District Factors | | | MODEL 41 Victim, Suspect, Case, Neighborhood, and Police District Factors | | | MODEL 42 Victim, Suspect, Case, Neighborhood, and Police District Factors w/ Racial Dyads | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** |
| ***Victim characteristics*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Male victim(s) | 0.579** | 0.203 | 1.784** | 0.582*** | 0.166 | 1.790*** | 0.587*** | 0.165 | 1.798*** |
| Male and female victims | 0.239 | 0.251 | 1.270 | 0.247 | 0.277 | 1.280 | 0.248 | 0.256 | 1.282 |
| Female victim(s) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Black victim(s) | 0.777*** | 0.192 | 2.176*** | 0.931*** | 0.223 | 2.538*** | | | |
| Black and White victims | -0.422 | 0.255 | 0.656 | -0.214 | 0.276 | 0.807 | | | |
| White victim(s) | – | – | – | – | – | – | | | |
| Non-Hispanic victim(s) | 0.363 | 0.618 | 1.437 | -1.399* | 0.711 | 0.247* | -1.290 | 0.670 | 0.275 |
| Hispanic victim(s) (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Victim age | 0.037 | 0.023 | 1.038 | 0.030 | 0.028 | 1.031 | 0.034 | 0.029 | 1.034 |
| Victim age squared | -0.001* | 0.000 | 0.999* | -0.000 | 0.000 | 1.000 | -0.000 | 0.000 | 1.000 |
| Victims of multiple ages | 0.023 | 0.455 | 1.024 | 0.025 | 0.457 | 1.025 | 0.023 | 0.469 | 1.023 |
| Victim(s) of single age (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Suspect characteristics*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Male suspect(s) | | | | -0.265*** | 0.074 | 0.767*** | -0.256*** | 0.069 | 0.774*** |
| Male and female suspects | | | | 0.085 | 0.367 | 1.089 | 0.155 | 0.359 | 1.168 |
| Female suspect(s) (reference) | | | | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Black suspect(s) | | | | -0.477 | 0.272 | 0.620 | | | |
| Black and White suspects | | | | -0.716 | 0.567 | 0.489 | | | |
| White suspect(s) (reference) | | | | – | – | – | | | |
| Non-Hispanic suspect(s) | | | | 2.999*** | 0.792 | 20.060*** | 2.834*** | 0.753 | 17.02*** |
| Hispanic suspect(s) (reference) | | | | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Suspect age | | | | 0.067 | 0.052 | 1.069 | 0.071 | 0.053 | 1.073 |
| Suspect age squared | | | | -0.001 | 0.001 | 0.999 | -0.001 | 0.001 | 0.999 |
| Suspects of multiple ages | | | | -0.226 | 0.412 | 0.797 | -0.146 | 0.386 | 0.864 |
| Suspect(s) of single age (reference) | | | | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Victim-suspect racial dyads*** | | | | | | | | | |

**Table 47 (continued)**

| | MODEL 40 | | | MODEL 41 | | | MODEL 42 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ß | SE | OR | ß | SE | OR | ß | SE | OR |
| WvWs | | | | | | | 0.608** | 0.215 | 1.836** |
| MvMs | | | | | | | -0.0914 | 0.885 | 0.913 |
| BvWs | | | | | | | 0.878 | 0.630 | 2.406 |
| BvMs | | | | | | | – | – | – |
| BvBs | | | | | | | 0.979*** | 0.207 | 2.662*** |
| WvMs | | | | | | | – | – | – |
| MvBs | | | | | | | -0.127 | 0.180 | 0.881 |
| MvWs | | | | | | | -0.569 | 1.674 | 0.566 |
| WvBs (reference) | | | | | | | – | – | – |
| ***Most serious crime type*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Homicide | 1.948 | 1.867 | 7.013 | 1.943 | 1.861 | 6.981 | 1.850 | 1.986 | 6.361 |
| Robbery | -0.022 | 0.101 | 0.978 | 0.007 | 0.100 | 1.007 | -0.004 | 0.110 | 0.996 |
| Rape | 0.469 | 0.620 | 1.598 | 0.474 | 0.556 | 1.606 | 0.427 | 0.550 | 1.532 |
| Assault (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Charge and person counts*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Number of charges | -0.362*** | 0.086 | 0.697*** | -0.412*** | 0.065 | 0.662*** | -0.404*** | 0.063 | 0.668*** |
| Number of victims | -0.085 | 0.174 | 0.919 | -0.066 | 0.192 | 0.936 | -0.071 | 0.199 | 0.932 |
| Number of suspects | 0.145* | 0.057 | 1.156* | 0.197 | 0.141 | 1.218 | 0.186 | 0.132 | 1.204 |
| ***Weapon type(s)*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Firearm | -0.229 | 0.131 | 0.795 | -0.183 | 0.139 | 0.833 | -0.201 | 0.140 | 0.818 |
| Knife | 0.145 | 0.268 | 1.156 | 0.100 | 0.293 | 1.105 | 0.118 | 0.289 | 1.125 |
| Unknown/other weapon | 1.649 | 0.954 | 5.202 | 1.320 | 0.997 | 3.745 | 1.301 | 0.980 | 3.672 |
| Multiple weapon types | 0.064 | 0.327 | 1.067 | 0.105 | 0.351 | 1.111 | 0.080 | 0.344 | 1.083 |
| No weapon | -0.405 | 0.329 | 0.667 | -0.371 | 0.320 | 0.690 | -0.394 | 0.318 | 0.675 |
| Personal weapon (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Victim injury*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Minor injury | 0.061 | 0.137 | 1.063 | 0.040 | 0.141 | 1.040 | 0.032 | 0.137 | 1.032 |
| Major injury | -0.653*** | 0.154 | 0.521*** | -0.666*** | 0.178 | 0.514*** | -0.667*** | 0.180 | 0.513*** |
| Multiple injury types | 0.032 | 0.437 | 1.033 | 0.000 | 0.422 | 1.000 | -0.040 | 0.445 | 0.961 |
| No/unknown injury (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Victim-suspect relationship*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Within family | 0.381 | 0.258 | 1.464 | 0.342 | 0.242 | 1.408 | 0.317 | 0.240 | 1.373 |
| Outside of family | 0.867*** | 0.111 | 2.380*** | 0.827*** | 0.098 | 2.286*** | 0.806*** | 0.108 | 2.239*** |
| Other relationship | 1.094 | 0.620 | 2.987 | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Unknown relationship | 1.292*** | 0.256 | 3.639*** | 1.431*** | 0.335 | 4.182*** | 1.398*** | 0.341 | 4.046*** |

**Table 47 (continued)**

| | MODEL 40 | | | MODEL 41 | | | MODEL 42 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** | **ß** | **SE** | **OR** |
| Relationship not applicable | -1.010** | 0.340 | 0.364** | -0.899* | 0.409 | 0.407* | -0.906* | 0.407 | 0.404* |
| Multiple relationships | 0.805*** | 0.121 | 2.236*** | 0.717*** | 0.177 | 2.049*** | 0.640** | 0.200 | 1.896** |
| Stranger (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Additional controls*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Second shift | 0.095 | 0.206 | 1.100 | 0.152 | 0.196 | 1.164 | 0.161 | 0.199 | 1.174 |
| Third shift | 0.260 | 0.198 | 1.297 | 0.295 | 0.199 | 1.344 | 0.280 | 0.208 | 1.324 |
| First shift (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Weekday | -0.025 | 0.104 | 0.975 | -0.022 | 0.110 | 0.979 | -0.043 | 0.120 | 0.958 |
| Weekend (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Attempted | 0.021 | 0.641 | 1.021 | -0.055 | 0.576 | 0.947 | -0.046 | 0.579 | 0.955 |
| Completed (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Domestic | 0.501*** | 0.116 | 1.650*** | 0.515*** | 0.091 | 1.673*** | 0.501*** | 0.096 | 1.651*** |
| Not domestic (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Justice system action*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Witness | -0.146 | 0.210 | 0.864 | -0.043 | 0.202 | 0.958 | -0.024 | 0.205 | 0.977 |
| No witness (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Neighborhood characteristics*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Concentrated disadvantage | 0.015 | 0.047 | 1.015 | -0.010 | 0.043 | 0.990 | -0.006 | 0.049 | 0.994 |
| Percent Black | 0.002 | 0.001 | 1.002 | 0.003** | 0.001 | 1.003** | 0.003* | 0.001 | 1.003* |
| Population | -0.180 | 0.162 | 0.835 | -0.227 | 0.173 | 0.797 | -0.232 | 0.182 | 0.793 |
| Cross-classified | 0.014 | 0.080 | 1.014 | 0.054 | 0.073 | 1.055 | 0.049 | 0.074 | 1.050 |
| Not cross-classified (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Neighborhood crime | 0.012* | 0.005 | 1.012* | 0.014* | 0.007 | 1.014* | 0.014 | 0.007 | 1.014 |
| ***Police district characteristics*** | | | | | | | | | |
| District crime | -1.068 | 3.510 | 0.344 | -1.610 | 3.237 | 0.200 | -1.944 | 2.909 | 0.143 |
| Detective workload | -0.002 | 0.027 | 0.998 | 0.001 | 0.024 | 1.001 | 0.004 | 0.021 | 1.004 |
| ***Interacting race and crime type*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Black victim X Homicide | -3.558 | 1.826 | 0.029 | -3.511 | 1.817 | 0.030 | | | |
| BvBs X Homicide | | | | | | | -3.379 | 1.96 | 0.034 |
| Constant | 0.588 | 1.301 | 1.800 | -0.755 | 1.596 | 0.470 | -1.281 | 1.776 | 0.278 |

* indicates p < .05, ** indicates p < .01, *** indicates p < .001

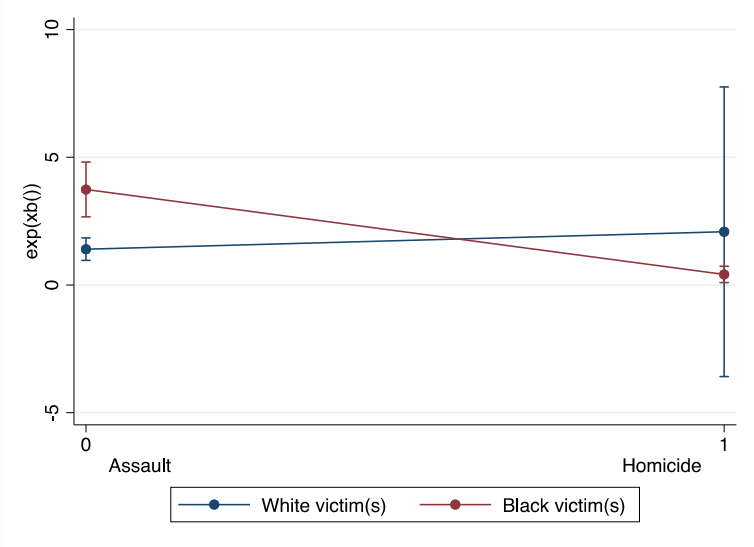
Model 40. L1 *N* = 1,259 offenses; L2 *N* = 291 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

Model 41. L1 *N* = 1,227 offenses; L2 *N* = 289 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

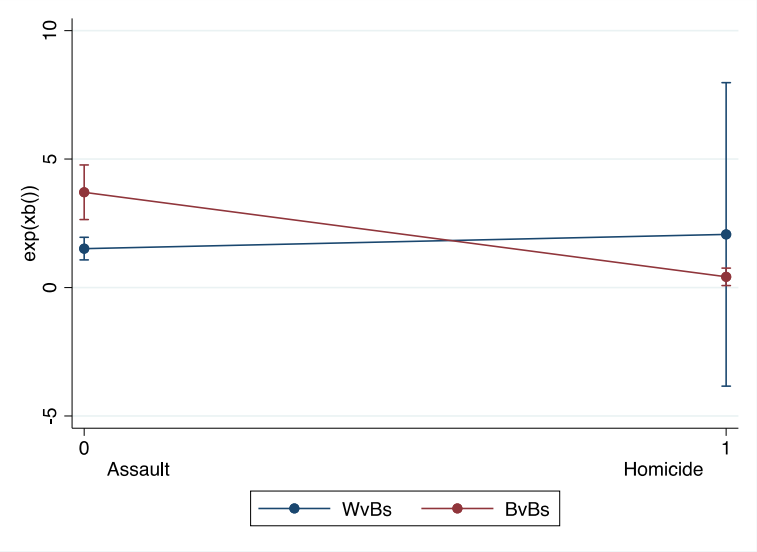
Model 42. L1 *N* = 1,220 offenses; L2 *N* = 289 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

**Figure 8. The relationship between crime type and case refusal, by victim race**

**A. Model 41**




**B. Model 42**




The coefficients are largely consistent with previous models with the exception of non-Hispanic victims' crimes becoming significantly less likely to be refused than Hispanic victims' crimes in Model 41 (in line with victim devaluation), neighborhood crime losing its significance in Model 42, and, in suspect models (Models 41-42), percent Black becoming positively and significantly related to case refusal, suggesting the devaluation of cases occurring in Black neighborhoods.

## 6.3 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Overall, the results from this chapter suggest that even when controlling for neighborhood and police district characteristics, characteristics of people and cases significantly impact the probability of a crime being cleared by the police and/or refused for prosecution in St. Louis, MO. The findings suggest that police and prosecutors disproportionately solve and prosecute crimes based on particular characteristics of victims, suspects, and cases. Evidence supports the situational (Addington, 2006; Litwin, 2004; Litwin & Xu, 2007) and case solvability theses (Litwin, 2004; Roberts, 2007), and partial support is found for the victim and suspect devaluation hypotheses (Black, 1976; Regoeczi, Jarvis, & Riedel, 2008; Roberts & Lyons, 2009).

The effects of race and other complaint-level characteristics appear to largely depend on the criminal justice stage in question, as well as the inclusion of victim and suspect race – and their interaction – in models. While some victim and suspect (e.g., sex, race) and case (e.g., victim injury) predictors remain significant across models and case processing stage, others appear to affect one outcome and not the other, and still others influence clearance and prosecution in distinct ways. Further, the exploration of interaction effects suggests that moderation effects may be dependent on criminal justice stage, with the effects of case solvability and case devaluation on race differing for clearance and prosecution. Importantly, the findings suggest that racial disparities in criminal justice system treatment may be experienced during initial criminal justice stages.

### 6.3.1 SUMMARIZING RACE AND CLEARANCE FINDINGS

Table 48 revisits findings regarding victim race and clearance across models to highlight how the effects of victim race on clearance changed as different sets of variables were added to models. It focuses on models analyzing victim characteristics, as suspect models present potential issues relating to endogeneity. Specifically, it summarizes victim race results from regressions examining victim race and clearance; victim characteristics and clearance; person and case characteristics and clearance; person-, case-, neighborhood-, and police district-level information; and interactions between victim race and victim-suspect relationship and victim race and crime type.[68] Due to space constraints and the dissertation's focus on race, the table presents odds ratios for race-related variables, and suppresses variables that are not related to race. [69]

Overall, the findings indicate that the associations between victim race and clearance depend on the inclusion of various theoretically relevant indicators. In models that are limited to explaining associations between victim characteristics and clearance, cases involving Black and White victims are found to be more likely to have their crimes cleared in comparison to ones involving White victims, most likely due to factors such as charge count that are not controlled for in these models. Black victims of violence are

[68] Models examining persons, cases, and neighborhoods are not included in the table because the results from them largely mirror models examining persons, cases, neighborhoods, and police districts.
[69] See Model 1 (Table 34) for full results examining victim race; Model 4 (Table 35) for results examining victims; Model 7 (Table 36) for results examining victims and cases; Model 13 (Table 38) for results examining victims, cases, neighborhoods, and police districts; and Models 16 (Table 39) and 19 (Table 40) for results examining victim race and V-S relationship and victim race and crime type interactions.

**Table 48. Summarizing the relationship between victim race and violent crime clearance**

| | MODEL 1 Victim Race | MODEL 4 Victim Factors | MODEL 7 Victim and Case Factors | MODEL 13 Victim, Case, Neighborhood, and Police District Factors | MODEL 16 Interacting Victim Race and V-S Relationship | MODEL 19 Interacting Victim Race and Crime Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **OR** | **OR** | **OR** | **OR** | **OR** | **OR** |
| ***Victim characteristics*** | | | | | | |
| Black victim(s) | 0.958 | 0.911 | 0.558** | 0.613* | 0.947 | 0.610* |
| Black and White victims | 1.703*** | 1.853** | 1.083 | 1.116 | 1.127 | 1.130 |
| White victim(s) (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Interaction effects*** | | | | | | |
| Black victim X Stranger | | | | | 0.493*** | |
| Black victim X Homicide | | | | | | 3.615 |

* indicates p < .05, ** indicates p < .01, *** indicates p < .001

Model 1. L1 *N* = 4,091 offenses; L2 *N* = 337 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

Model 4. L1 *N* = 3,943 offenses; L2 *N* = 336 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

Model 7. L1 *N* = 2,855 offenses; L2 *N* = 333 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

Models 13, 16, and 19. L1 *N* = 2,854 offenses; L2 *N* = 332 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

not found to experience significant disparities in clearance until relevant case, neighborhood, and police district factors are controlled for. Once they are, racial disparities in treatment become more in line with hypotheses, indicating that Black victims are less likely than White victims to have their crimes cleared.

The exploration of interaction effects demonstrates that Black victims are especially unlikely to have their crimes cleared in cases involving relationships coded as involving strangers. This finding is in line with hypotheses, and there are several possible explanations for the relationship. It may be that crimes involving strangers and Black victims do not receive the attention that other cases do, with detectives viewing such cases as deserving of less attention. Alternatively, it may be that witnesses and victims involved in cases involving Black victims are fearful of retaliation that comes from snitching. Because they are less trusting of the police, Black victims might be less likely to cooperate and/or provide information when asked about victim-suspect relationship, leading to higher recordings of stranger relationships.

The significant, negative relationship between Black victim race and clearance, and the positive and significant relationship between homicide and clearance in models that controlled for case characteristics brought the case devaluation thesis into question. To determine whether crime type moderates the effect of race on clearance, an interaction term between victim race and homicide was added to the full clearance model. In line with the case devaluation thesis, and in contrast to the victim devaluation hypothesis, the odds of clearance for homicides committed against Black victims were not significantly different from the odds of clearance for homicides committed against White victims, suggesting that homicides are prioritized by the police and/or public. The large

confidence intervals for homicides, however, indicate that these findings should be interpreted with caution.

### 6.3.2 SUMMARIZING RACE AND CASE REFUSAL FINDINGS

Tables 49 and 50 revisit findings regarding victim race and case refusal across models to similarly highlight how the effects of race change depending on the inclusion of various controls, as well as how findings change depending on whether victim and suspect race are modeled separately as opposed to as dyads. Since the inclusion of suspect race does not present missing data problems in case refusal models, the summaries include victim and suspect race. Each table presents race effects from regressions examining race and case refusal; victim and suspect characteristics; person and case characteristics; person-, case-, neighborhood-, and police district-level characteristics; and interactions between victim race and victim-suspect relationship, as well as victim race and crime type.[70] The tables present odds ratios for race variables, and suppress other predictors.[71]

As was the case in clearance models, the findings indicate that associations between race and case refusal depend on the inclusion of theoretically relevant indicators. Further, the race effects depend on the way in which race is modeled. The first case refusal summary table (Table 49), which focuses on the findings from models that

[70] Models examining persons, cases, and neighborhoods are not included in the table because the results from them largely mirror models examining persons, cases, neighborhoods, and police districts.
[71] See Models 23 and 24 in Table 41 for full regression results examining race and case refusal; Models 26 and 27 in Table 42 for models analyzing victim and suspect characteristics; Models 29 and 30 in Table 43 for results examining person and case characteristics; Models 35 and 36 in Table 45 for results examining person-, case-, neighborhood-, and police district-level information; and Models 38 and 29 (Table 46), as well as 41 and 42 (Table 47) for models examining interactions between victim race and victim-suspect relationship and victim race and crime type, respectively.

**Table 49. Summarizing the relationship between victim and suspect race and violent crime case refusal**

| | MODEL 23 Victim and Suspect Race | MODEL 26 Victim and Suspect Factors | MODEL 29 Victim, Suspect, and Case Factors | MODEL 35 Victim, Suspect, Case, Neighborhood, and Police District Factors | MODEL 38 Interacting Victim Race and V-S Relationship | MODEL 41 Interacting Victim Race and Crime Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **OR** | **OR** | **OR** | **OR** | **OR** | **OR** |
| ***Victim characteristics*** | | | | | | |
| Black victim(s) | 2.865*** | 2.989*** | 2.224*** | 2.463*** | 2.142*** | 2.538*** |
| Black and White victims | 0.543** | 0.723 | 0.806 | 0.873 | 0.797 | 0.807 |
| White victim(s) (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Suspect characteristics*** | | | | | | |
| Black suspect(s) | 0.606** | 0.473** | 0.607 | 0.633 | 0.679 | 0.620 |
| Black and White suspects | 1.208 | 0.619 | 0.661 | 0.578 | 0.557 | 0.489 |
| White suspect(s) (reference) | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| ***Interaction effects*** | | | | | | |
| Black victim X Stranger | | | | | 1.291 | |
| Black victim X Homicide | | | | | | 0.030 |

* indicates p < .05, ** indicates p < .01, *** indicates p < .001

Model 23. L1 *N* = 1,411 offenses; L2 *N* = 303 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

Model 26. L1 *N* = 1,336 offenses; L2 *N* = 299 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

Models 29, 35, 38, and 41. L1 *N* = 1,227 offenses; L2 *N* = 289 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

examine victim and suspect race separately, demonstrates the limits of models that are limited to exploring the relationships between person (i.e., victim and suspect) characteristics and case refusal. Specifically, the results show that Black suspects are significantly less likely to have their cases refused by the prosecutor's office, indicating in line with expectations that Black individuals' cases are prioritized for punishment. When relevant case, neighborhood, and police district characteristics are considered, the relationship between suspect race and case refusal becomes non-significant. Across models, cases involving Black victims are found to be significantly more likely to be refused than ones involving White victims, indicating support for Black victim devaluation and underscoring the importance of including victim race predictors in analyses of case screening.

The results presented in Table 50 highlight the importance of exploring victim and suspect race in tandem. Across all models, cases involving White victims and Black suspects have lower odds of case refusal than ones involving Black victims and suspects, indicating partial support for Black's devaluation theory (1976) and the idea that criminal justice systems will neglect Black victims but punish Black suspects. In models that use Black suspects and victims as the reference category, this effect holds in cases involving Black suspects and White victims as well as White and Black victims. It therefore appears that while Black individuals may be prioritized for punishment as suspects when they victimize Whites, the odds of Black victim devaluation increase in cases involving Black suspects. These are important findings that not only highlight the complex nature of inequality, but also provide insight into how disparities may be operating alongside one another to disadvantage Black victims and suspects. The results from these models

**Table 50. Summarizing the relationship between victim-suspect racial dyads and violent crime case refusal**

| | MODEL 24 Victim and Suspect Race | MODEL 27 Victim and Suspect Factors | MODEL 30 Victim, Suspect, and Case Factors | MODEL 36 Victim, Suspect, Case, Neighborhood, and Police District Factors | MODEL 39 Interacting Victim Race and V-S Relationship | MODEL 42 Interacting Victim Race and Crime Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **OR** | **OR** | **OR** | **OR** | **OR** | **OR** |
| ***Victim-suspect racial dyads*** | | | | | | |
| WvWs | 0.665* | 0.794 | 0.802 | 0.696 | 1.678** | 1.836** |
| MvMs | 0.599 | 0.487 | 0.578 | 0.495 | 1.038 | 0.913 |
| BvWs | 0.687 | 0.895 | 1.002 | 0.912 | 2.266 | 2.406 |
| BvMs | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| WvBs (ref: Models 39 and 42) | 0.315*** | 0.314*** | 0.426*** | 0.387*** | – | – |
| WvMs | 0.191* | – | – | – | – | – |
| MvBs | 0.197*** | 0.235*** | 0.381** | 0.364** | 0.870 | 0.881 |
| MvWs | 0.078 | 0.199 | 0.178 | 0.206 | 0.416 | 0.566 |
| BvBs (ref: Models 24-36) | – | – | – | – | 2.244*** | 2.662*** |
| ***Interaction effects*** | | | | | | |
| BvBs X Stranger | | | | | 1.294 | |
| BvBs X Homicide | | | | | | 0.034 |

* indicates p < .05, ** indicates p < .01, *** indicates p < .001

Model 24. L1 *N* = 1,406 offenses; L2 *N* = 303 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

Model 27. L1 *N* = 1,336 offenses; L2 *N* = 299 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

Models 30, 36, 39, and 42. L1 *N* = 1,220 offenses; L2 *N* = 289 block groups; clustered in 6 police districts

also demonstrate the importance of considering cases involving multiple victims and offenders, as combinations of races matter for clearance and prosecution.

The models presented in Table 50 also underscore the significance of controlling for relevant person, case, neighborhood, and police district factors. In Model 24, which is limited to examining victim and suspect racial dyads, cases involving White victims and White suspects are significantly less likely to be refused than cases involving Black victims and suspects. Importantly, however, these effects lose significance once person, case, neighborhood, and police district factors are controlled for.

The interaction between victim race and victim-suspect relationship is non-significant across case refusal models. While racial differences appear to decline depending on victim-suspect information, the differences are not significant, regardless of whether victim race is measured on its own (see Table 49) or in combination with suspect race (see Table 50).

Overall, the results from case refusal models generally suggest support for Black victim devaluation, and homicides and assaults appear to have similar odds of refusal when examined in full models. Like in clearance models, analyses of moderation effects between victim race and homicide demonstrate that homicides committed against Black and White victims appear to have similar refusal likelihoods. This is in line with the case devaluation hypothesis, and in contrast to the Black victim devaluation hypothesis, but the effects for homicides involving White victims (alone and in combination with Black suspects) have wide confidence intervals and should be interpreted with caution. Assaults that involve Black victims are more likely to be refused than assaults involving White

victims, indicating perhaps that these cases are unlikely to be prioritized during case screening.

# CHAPTER 7

# CONCLUSION

## 7.1 SUMMARY

### 7.1.1 DISSERTATION AIMS

The purpose of this dissertation was to examine racial disparities in victim and suspect treatment across police and prosecutor stages of case processing. By presenting a working framework from which we might study case processing stages, and examining combinations of factors across crime types and multiple levels of analysis, the study contributes to literature on criminal justice case processing.

The dissertation hypothesized that Black Americans are subject to experiencing a dual disadvantage. Specifically, while Black victims were hypothesized to be neglected by the police and prosecutors, Black suspects were expected to be disproportionately prioritized for punishment via clearance and case acceptance. The dissertation expected racial disparities to significantly affect clearance and prosecution on their own and when modeled alongside other theoretically relevant case-, neighborhood, and police district-level predictors, such as victim-suspect relationship and detective workload.

Because the study sample includes cases involving multiple victims and suspects, it was able to investigate a more comprehensive set of victim-suspect racial dyads than those traditionally discussed and examined (e.g., Black, 1976; Taylor et al., 2009). In considering racial dyads, cases involving Black suspects and White victims were expected to be most likely to be cleared and prosecuted, followed by cases involving White suspects and victims and cases involving Black suspects and victims. It was

hypothesized that cases involving White suspects and Black victims would be least likely to be prioritized, as White suspects are provided impunity and Black victims tend not to enjoy legal protection. Finally, cases involving any White victims and Black suspects were hypothesized to be taken more seriously than ones involving only Black victims and suspects, and in cases involving White suspects, cases involving Black and White victims were expected to be taken less seriously than ones involving Black victims and suspects.

The dissertation hypothesized that case solvability and devaluation variables would moderate the effects of race on criminal justice case processing. Specifically, cases involving Black victims (alone and in combination with Black suspects) were hypothesized to be especially unlikely to be cleared and prosecuted when they involved stranger victim-suspect relationships, and were expected to be likely to be cleared and prosecuted when they involved homicides, as such crime types appear to be prioritized by criminal justice systems and their constituents.

### 7.1.2 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

The results presented in the dissertation demonstrate that clearance and prosecution rates for violent crime in St. Louis are low, and that the effects of race and other complaint-level characteristics largely depend on the criminal justice stage in question, as well as the inclusion of victim and suspect race – and their interaction – in models. Importantly, the findings suggest that racial disparities in criminal justice system treatment may be experienced during initial criminal justice stages, and that variables such as victim-suspect relationship may distinctly influence clearance and prosecution.

Overall, the results show that even when controlling for neighborhood and police district characteristics, characteristics of people and cases significantly impact the probability of a crime being cleared by the police and/or refused by prosecutors. Victim-focused clearance models demonstrate that male, Black, and Hispanic victims may be devalued by the police, but specific features of cases, such as victim-suspect relationship and number of charges, also appear to influence clearance in expected ways. Specifically, crimes involving within family and outside of family victim-suspect relationships are particularly likely to be cleared by the police, as are cases that occur within the home, ones involving multiple charges, and ones involving victims who experienced major injuries.

In contrast to expectations, Black suspects' cases were found to have lower odds of clearance compared to cases involving White suspects. While this may demonstrate that Black suspects are not prioritized for punishment, it more likely results from the intraracial nature of crime, or suggests that factors other than race, such as incident motive and evidentiary strength, are operating to affect the relationship between race and clearance (see *Data Limitations*). This finding aligns with recent evidence from St. Louis, MO suggesting that non-White victims might not report crimes or cooperate with criminal justice systems, even when seriously injured (Hipple et al., 2019). In models examining victim-suspect racial dyads, the results suggest that cases involving both White and Black suspects will be prioritized by the police, and that Black victims' crimes will have low odds of clearance unless they involve victimization by Black and White suspects. More research should be done to explore cases involving victims and suspects of multiple race combinations.

Black victims appear to be devalued during case screening, with cases involving them experiencing high odds of prosecutorial case refusal. Findings from racial dyad models of case refusal demonstrate that White victims' cases are prioritized for formal case processing when they involve one or more Black suspects, and also that Black victims' cases are refused for prosecution unless they involve White victims and Black suspects. The low odds of refusal found among cases involving White victims and Black suspects suggests that there is something unique about these cases that enhance prioritization by the prosecutor's office. The finding suggesting that Black victims will be neglected by prosecutors unless victimized by Black suspects and alongside White victims is interesting and suggests that moving beyond the study of intra-racial crime may be necessary for capturing complex processes of dual disadvantage.

Males appear to be more likely than females to experience disadvantage as victims and suspects at the case refusal stage of case processing. As victims, males have increased odds of case refusal, and as suspects, they have increased odds of prosecution. While victim ethnicity appears to be important at the clearance stage of case processing, Hispanic suspects are found to be disproportionately punished by the criminal justice system at the case screening stage. More research should be done to explore the intersectionality of sex, race, and ethnicity.

Case-related factors also appear to impact criminal justice treatment. Although cases with unknown victim-suspect relationships have high odds of prosecutorial refusal, cases involving outside of family relationships are more likely than stranger complaints to be refused across case screening models, and crimes committed within the home are more likely than non-domestic crimes to be refused for prosecution.

Importantly, particular victim and suspect (e.g., sex, race) and case (e.g., domestic status, victim injury, victim-suspect relationship) predictors remain significant across model types and case processing stages. Major victim injuries and charge counts increase the odds of clearance and case acceptance, while Black and male victims' cases appear to be devalued. Neighborhood and police district variables are, for the most part, nonsignificant predictors of clearance and case refusal.

Other relationships appear to differ by case processing stage. Most notably, while Black suspects' crimes are less likely than White suspects' crimes to be cleared, they are more likely to be prosecuted. This finding suggests that the prioritization of cases involving Black suspects may not begin during policing, but rather in the prosecutor's office. While close interpersonal relationships appear to be important in positively influencing clearance, these relationships are positively associated with case refusal. This finding has a number of possible explanations. It may be that interpersonal relationships promote crime clearance. Involving the police in a personal, domestic matter may be viewed as justifiable, and as a short-term solution with manageable consequences. Cases take time to reach the prosecutor's office, and if and when they do, they may have fundamentally different features, or prosecution may be viewed as unnecessary, too serious, or intimidating, deterring victims and/or witnesses from following through with pressing charges. Alternatively, cases involving persons known well to the victim(s) may take more time and energy to prosecute than ones involving, for instance, strangers, leading prosecutors to reject them more. More research should be done to track cases from the police to the prosecutor's office. Such research may be able to explain why cases occurring in the home and involving certain victim-suspect relationships are more

or less likely to be processed through the justice system, depending on the case processing stage in question.

Perhaps the most surprising results in this study, and ones that go against recent studies of clearance (Vaughn, 2020) and journalists' claims (Leovy, 2015; Lowery et al., 2018), are the null effects concerning witnesses and weapon types. Vaughn's (2020) study of violent crime clearance in St. Louis, MO (2010-2012), found witness information to be important for crime clearance, and for the clearance of Black victims' crimes in particular. Her study also found that firearm crimes were less likely to be cleared than ones involving personal weapons. In the current study, however, witnesses and, for the most part, weapon types were not found to influence the clearance or refusal of cases. While this may suggest that witnesses and weapons are not germane to clearance and prosecution, it more likely suggests that the crime rise that took place in 2015 affected the SLMPD's ability to obtain sufficient witness and weapon information.

Finally, interaction analyses suggest that while victim-suspect relationships have a moderating effect on the relationship between race and clearance, they may not significantly impact prosecution. While Black and White victims do not appear to experience significant differences in clearance odds for cases involving within family relationships, among Black victims, stranger victim-suspect relationships significantly reduce the likelihood of crime clearance. Analyses modeling the interactions between victim (and suspect) race and homicide found no significant differences in case clearance or refusal for homicides involving Black versus White victims (and Black suspects), suggesting support for the idea that such crimes are treated similarly. However, predicted margins analyses in case refusal models showed large differences in the refusal odds of

assaults versus homicides involving Black victims (alone and in combination with Black suspects), suggesting that assaults involving Black victims are more likely to be refused than assaults involving White victims.

It is vital that researchers continue to situate studies of criminal justice system treatment within a comprehensive framework that examines the various effects of race and other indicators on criminal justice case processing. In addition to connecting early case processing stages to later stages, researchers should do their best to include measures of victim and suspect race in analyses.

## 7.2 FUTURE RESEARCH

### 7.2.1 ACCESS TO JUSTICE

*Criminal Justice Punishment*

The findings presented in the dissertation demonstrate the complex nature of racial disparities and the importance of reliable data collection and analysis. To pinpoint the ways in which victims and suspects experience the criminal justice system, more complete and reliable quantitative data are needed. Future research should examine police investigative reports, as well as detailed case records from the prosecutor's office to parse out information relating to crimes (e.g., motives), the persons involved in them, and responses to them.

Information regarding why cases are not cleared or prosecuted would, of course, be useful in explaining how cases unfold across police and prosecutor decision-making stages.[72] Police and prosecutor records might also provide insight into suspect race as

[72] It might be, for example, that a suspect was arrested due to witness identification, but the case was dropped by the prosecutor due to wrongful arrest.

reported by the victim, which would resolve the endogeneity problem found in clearance research and allow for the differentiation of clearance types (Spohn & Tellis, 2019). Further, they might contain other data pertaining to victims, suspects, and witnesses, such as criminal history, socioeconomic status, and morality, that have been shown to impact case processing (Beichner & Spohn, 2005; Wooldredge, 1998; Wooldredge et al., 2015). Data regarding a case's strength of evidence and investigative effort are important to fully understanding case processing (Baldus & Woodworth, 2009; Wellford et al., 2019; Baldus et al., 2009). It would be useful to analyze, for instance, the number of times criminal justice actors contacted witnesses, and what happened during interactions between them, to determine whether devaluation is occurring. Finally, it is important to control for demographic and workload information pertaining to criminal justice system agents.

Qualitative research is needed to assess the preferences and experiences of victims of violent crime. Overall, we know little about victim preferences regarding punishment. Research suggests that victims of crime prefer that the police and prosecutors assigned to their cases provide them with attention and resources (Braga & MacDonald, 2019; Herman, 2010; Miller, 2015; Natapoff, 2009), demonstrating the importance of outcomes such as case clearance and prosecution, but specific punishment

preferences of victims appear complex and difficult to predict.[73-74] More research is needed to explore the complexities that come with studying access to justice. How do victims feel, for instance, when their crimes are solved and prosecuted, but they do not result in conviction or restitution judgements? Are individuals satisfied when their victimizers are formally arrested, prosecuted, and/or convicted for crimes that they themselves were not involved in?

Finally, it is important that researchers study the perceptions and experiences of criminal justice agents in more depth, with particular attention being paid to whether police and prosecutors knowingly act in ways that discriminate against certain populations.[75] While scholars such as Spohn and Tellis (2019) have provided a foundation for understanding different types of actors, more research should be done to examine the relationship between police and prosecutors within and across jurisdictions. We must pay careful attention to local and often mundane decisions, such as police

[73] As Erez and Tontodonato (1992: 412) note, "victims who are unhappy with the disposition and who believe that the sentence is too lenient will be dissatisfied, regardless of the quality of the services they receive or the sympathy and understanding they are given by the various agents of the system. On the other hand, victims may be willing to forgive and forget all the hardships they endured during the process if they think it was worth the trouble – that is, if they think the offender got what he or she deserved according to their criteria for a fair sentence." Many victims tend to be quite lenient in their sentencing preferences and overwhelmingly prefer fair treatment by police and prosecutors during case processing (Elliot et al., 2012, 2014; Wemmers et al., 1995) and restorative alternatives to courts (Herman, 2010; Mattinson & Mirrlees-Black, 2000; Strang & Sherman, 2003). In interviews with a nationally representative sample of over 800 crime victims, the 2016 National Survey of Victims' Views (NSVV) found that victims do not tend to prefer harsh punishment. Regardless of race, gender, age, income, and political party affiliation, the overwhelming majority of crime victims prefer investments in crime prevention and treatment to harsh punishment (Alliance for Safety and Justice, 2019). Black victims appear particularly likely (68%) to favor alternatives to incarceration (Alliance for Safety and Justice, 2019).

[74] Case outcomes appear to be important indicators of future victim behavior. In their consumer survey of 180 domestic violence victims in Miami-Dade, FL, Hickman and Simpson (2003) found that victim satisfaction was related to procedural and distributive justice, and outcomes mattered more than fair treatment for re-utilization of the police. Specifically, victims were more likely to call the police in the future if officers acted in accordance with victim preferences, regardless of what they were.

[75] Forman (2017: 129) notes that "where lawyers and judges see due process, many officers see a series of incoherent, permissive decisions that conspire to undo the hard, often dangerous work that produced an arrest in the first place." Researchers should determine whether this is the case, and how policies might promote interagency collaboration.

officers' decisions to miss court hearings and attorneys' decisions to inform victims of their rights, which together make up our justice system and can have profound effects on the lives of citizens.

*Additional Case Processing Outcomes*

This study is one of distributive, rather than procedural, justice. It is also limited to explaining formal clearance and prosecution outcomes. Future research should explore in more depth the various processes that make up criminal justice system treatment, as well as informal treatment outcomes. Researchers might examine, for instance, the ways in which various justice system actors (e.g., victim service representatives, detectives, prosecutors) behave in their interactions with victims, witnesses, suspects, and communities, and the number of hours detectives and attorneys spend investigating cases involving Black victims versus White ones.

Acknowledging and analyzing of a variety of non-punitive outcomes will be particularly important for studying victim neglect. Research examining victim experiences suggests that in addition to being less likely to be cleared or prosecuted, Black victims' crimes might fail to be provided various types of resources, information, and advocacy.[76] As Martin Luther King Jr. suggested (1964: 17), reforms may be used as tokenism symbols that favor a few "to obscure the persisting reality of segregation and

[76] One theory that carefully considers various types of victim treatment is Herman's (2010: 2) parallel justice framework, which "is rooted in the belief that society has an obligation to provide justice to victims." Herman argues that the criminal justice process has been ineffective in attending to the welfare crime victims, and that a number of reforms–including increasing access to case information and resources–are essential for repairing harm done to victims. Other researchers also argue that victims should be provided the ability to actively participate throughout the criminal justice process, emotional restoration and apology, material reparation offers, and fair and respectful treatment (e.g., Elloitt et al., 2012, 2014; Strang & Sherman, 2003; Wemmers et al., 1995).

discrimination." Alternatively, they may only heighten or intensify traditionally discriminatory practices. A question that remains unanswered is whether the promises guaranteed by the victim rights movement ever came to fruition, and if so, whether they disproportionately favor certain individuals and communities over others.

While research regarding victim punishment preferences has been mixed, victims appear to have specific needs regarding access to case information and restitution (Herman, 2010).[77] One of the most important indicators of victim satisfaction appears to be informational justice. Victims who are kept informed about their case, and are provided information about their rights, appear to hold positive experiences with the justice system (Shapland et al., 1985; Wemmers, 1999). Access to material resources also appears to be important for victim satisfaction (Waldman, 2007).

Research generally suggests that victims' needs are not met. In interviews with 1,308 victims, Kilpatrick and colleagues (1998) examined the effects of a number of victim rights laws mandating victims' right to notification, right to be present, right to be heard, and right to restitution. The researchers found that while the presence of strong victims' rights laws makes a difference in victim treatment, strong legal protection does not guarantee that victims' needs are met. Compared to states with weak legal protections for victims, states with strong legal protection were more likely to afford victims rights; to ensure that victims were involved in criminal justice system processes; to make victims feel the criminal justice system was responsive; and to notify victims of case

[77] For evidence suggesting victims' specific needs regarding access to case information and restitution, see also Maguire and Bennett,1982; Shapland, Willmore, and Duff, 1985; Strang and Sherman, 2003; Umbreit, 1989; and Wemmers et al., 1999. For more on victim neglect at various stages of case processing, see also Herman, 2010 and Miller, 2013.

events, rights, and available services. Further, victims in these states were more likely to exercise their rights and to give higher ratings of the criminal justice system and its actors (e.g., police). However, over a quarter of the victims interviewed within states with strong protections were dissatisfied with victim services, and a large proportion of victims were not contacted about case processing events, such as plea negotiations and sentencing hearings.

While the presence of victims' rights and services appear to be a necessary condition for ensuring that victims' needs are addressed, it is not sufficient, as many rights and services appear to go undelivered. Future research on this topic is necessary to fully understanding disparities in treatment within and across various criminal justice stages and institutions.

*Beyond Criminal Justice*

Finally, the criminal justice system is one of many state institutions that disproportionately benefit and neglect specific populations of people. While a number of studies have detailed the experiences of those arrested, prosecuted, and imprisoned, more research is needed that assesses the experiences of victims with the criminal justice system, as well as their experiences with other institutions, including education, employment, housing, and healthcare. Investigations of access to various types of resources, such as to vocational training, addiction services, recreation centers, libraries, parks, and the like are necessary for fully understanding "what works" to promote victim well-being and to reduce crime. Interdisciplinary research that explores the preferences

and experiences of Black Americans who are situated in disadvantaged, high-crime neighborhoods will be particularly important.

### 7.2.2 VIOLENCE

The current study recognizes that the simultaneous over-punishment and neglect of Black individuals may have serious negative consequences, including withdrawal from the state and increasing violence. In addition to assessing disparities in treatment, then, it is vital that future research determine whether victims and/or communities that experience disparities in criminal justice system treatment come to be adversely affected by violence. Research should examine whether victims whose crimes are not provided attention through formal (e.g., prosecution, sentencing) and/or informal (e.g., being provided case information) means are more likely to be involved in future violence as victims and/or offenders, and whether high levels of victim neglect in a community are associated with community-level violence.

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